

Statement of Demands

Over the past weeks, months, and even years, for some, student-workers at the USC Bookstore have felt mistreatment and a lack of reason, understanding, and humanity from management. All traits that rightfully should be present at any workplace.

Following a series of isolated incidents of unfairness, hard conversations between workers and managers, and observations of situations and sayings that shouldn't be overlooked in the workplace, student-workers are coming forward with a list of demands.

These demands are expressed with the intent to neither spark conversation nor gain an apology from management but rather express together the mistreatment and failure of the USC Bookstore and, ultimately, generate change.

Overall, we DEMAND to be seen as student-workers in which emphasis on our academic identity is not just respected for its facial prestige or the ego boost of an authoritative figure. But rather, to be seen and treated as student-workers in our context as *students* who are dedicating 10+ hours to homework, to our USC extracurriculars, to our families, to our mental health, to the high potential of another job/career, and many other factors that encompass being a student that need not be explained but rather understood by management.

In addressing these demands, we aim to create a workplace that invites students to feel respected and valued as student-workers, rather than *workers* or inferior as we are made to feel at the USC Bookstore. This is an on-campus job/position, a work-study job, a student-worker position. We aim to not only combat unfairness in this workplace but also gain respect, value, and change for student-workers. In doing so, we believe the bookstore to be a place where students of various backgrounds can feel safe upon entrance and not be hindered, distraught, or mistreated inside.

If a resolution does not take place, we will be forced to take further action. These demands do not displace the option for a restorative resolution on both sides, but note that this is not synonymous with compromising student values, nor will it be synonymous with the complete absolution of humancentric values of the student-worker body. These demands are not new, and neither are the frustrations of student-workers.

List of Demands

1. Respectful and Transparent Communication:

- a. We demand management to instruct, rather than command, and place special effort towards providing transparency in action/ motive as well as contributing to communication channels that insist on equal footing regarding understanding and comprehension as it pertains to the student supervisors as well as student employees.
 - i. This does not look like passive-aggressive language in emails.
 - ii. This does not look like a barrage of new rules with no reason outside of suspicion.
 - iii. This does not look like managers or buyers yelling at students – especially considering USC follows en loco parentis, guaranteeing parental action, supervision, and treatment toward students.
 - iv. This does not look like the spread of police surveillance on employees while denying its existence.
 - v. This does not look like management berating or bad-mouthing employees to other employees and supervisors.
 - vi. This does not look like only communicating new rules to a handful of employees and expecting them to communicate to over 100 employees when this is not in the job description or efficient by any means.

2. Privacy:

- a. We demand a right to space and general personhood as well as the disbandment of police surveillance regarding the instruction of the Bookstore DPS to watch employees and their cell phone usage. The Bookstore DPS should not be constantly observing students on the numerous cameras in the store but rather focus on their original purpose of keeping the store safe and observing customers.
 - i. This does not look like DPS is watching employees for cell phone usage.
 - ii. This does not look like management asking DPS to observe employees on camera and report back to them regarding the work ethic of employees after management leaves at the end of their work day.
 - iii. This does not look like managers overstepping boundaries regarding student employees' bodily comforts.
 - iv. This does not look like using weight loss (telling students how to lose weight) as an analogy to promote student-worker 'motivations.'

3. Transparency in Promotion and Mobility:

- a. We demand full access to knowing how supervisors are promoted, the process of promotions, the efficacy of the current system, and the actual upward mobility as in opening up the process of recommendation – considering the current favoritism

present in the process of recommendations should both in supervisor recommendations and managerial decisions.

- i. This does not look like hiring a supervisor on the spot without an interview or recommendation– doing so out of convenience.
- ii. This does not look like management having a lack of urgency or pro-activity in regards to updating payroll for those who have been hired or promoted for months.
- iii. This does not look like blacklisting employees from getting scheduled without notice.
- iv. This does not look like a hiring process that claims to have a ‘waitlist’ of applicants but fails to follow it, instead hiring randomly from a pool of over 1,000 applicants.
- v. This does not look like a lack of pay transparency by having different hourly rates for employees and supervisors who are allegedly getting paid the same rate.
- vi. This does not look like offering varying pay to supervisor
- vii. This does not look like providing a non-livable wage – even the supervisors cannot live on off their pay

4. Professional Development:

- a. We demand the bookstore provide proper training to employees and properly hire rather than splurge hiring for busy seasons such as football season or for the holidays. We demand that new employees are guided through the process of registration, what to do if they feel unsafe, available resources of support, who they can talk to (not just the managers) regarding problems or suggestions, and transparency on the number of work hours they can receive.
 - i. This does not look like placing a mass number of newly hired employees on registers on gameday without proper training and without regard to their comfort with the given task.
 - ii. This does not look like hiring employees with the promise of a job and then blacklisting them from being scheduled and, therefore, paid without any notice.
 - iii. This does not look like management putting on a facade of ‘approachability,’ or kindness and understanding during ‘motivational speeches’ and ‘pep talks’ to portray the idea that students can talk to them about work-related issues all while being passive-aggressive and maintaining an air of superiority during normal work days.

5. Improved Working Conditions and Pay:

- a. We demand working conditions to be humane and consider student workers first instead of the constant stream of last-minute decisions or, again, dismissal of human needs as it pertains to student workers.

- b. We demand a higher hourly rate for football game days, in which employees are required to clear their schedules to work for +7 hours, even if their original availability fails to allow so. During games days there undeniably is a high influx of customers and workload, proving both mentally and physically draining after long shifts. We demand a time-and-a-half rate for game days without decreasing the number of employees who typically work game days.
 - i. This does not look like failing to provide a break room or even seating during game days for employees, especially at concession stands.
 - ii. This does not look like failing to provide cold water to employees working concession stands during hot game days and offering them hot water while reserving ice waters for customers.
 - iii. This does not look like putting the food on game days (especially porous items like sandwiches) in a tub of ice for cooling.
 - iv. This does not look like failing to create a space for employees and managers to discuss, critique, and thus, cultivate a job not without compassion, understanding, respect, and trust.
 - v. This does not look like publicly berating employees. Whether that be on the store floor, in front of customers, or in front of other employees.
 - vi. This does not look like allowing customers or the assistants of buyers (or anyone similar in nature) to yell at students simply out of frustration.
 - vii. This does not look like the impromptu declaring of new rules by managers as they see fit – such as on employee’s standing posture, water bottles, and chewing gum – without any communication to supervisors or employees.
 - viii. This does not look like management spontaneously deciding a dress code and uniform mid-semester without communicating to employees the ignorant and sexist reason in deciding so.
6. Job Security and Scheduling Guarantees:
- a. We demand the promised amount of weekly hours, on-time pay, and communication (not just through email but a dialogue between manager and employee in which they share a united stance to solve the problem). All without the employees' voice being dismissed out of convenience.
 - i. This does not look like being taken off the schedule for weeks at a time because management claimed it was an “*accident.*”
 - ii. This does not look like instructing employees to say they are work-study for the incentive of more hours – only to be told during the latter of the spring semester that saying this actually hinders the employee from getting scheduled.
 - iii. This does not look like receiving pay several weeks past due.
 - iv. This does not look like students receiving retaliation in asking for today’s bare minimum for worker protections.

- v. This does not look like retaliating (docking hours without explanation, firing students without explanation or notice) against students based on management's emotions or personal opinions.

7. Accountability by Management:

- a. We demand that management take accountability for the numerous mistakes and in general, integrate accountability into the daily lives upon setting foot in the bookstore. We call for a system that includes a commitment and steps in order to address and guarantee the long-term correction of mistakes. Employees are not required to, or expected to, forgive and/or forget managers, although act professionally, when apologies are made to the INDIVIDUALS as well as to entire groups.
 - i. This does not look like placing blame on employees for managements' mistakes.
 - ii. This does not look like placing blame on supervisors for failing to communicate new, impromptu, unprecedented rules to all employees, when in fact, not all supervisors were made aware of new rules by management.
 - iii. This does not look like deferring to *accidents* in the face of employees not receiving their guaranteed work-study hours.
 - iv. This does not look like placing the open racism case as a *past* issue that we have *all grown from*— that student may very well still have lingering thoughts about Butch Paredes' comments.
 - v. This does not look like blaming other managers, "higher-ups," or payroll for any mistakes on management's part, because frankly, they are not the managers of the employees at the USC Bookstore.