

## WHAT IS A UNION?

A **union** is an organization of workers dedicated to improving wages, hours, and working conditions within their workplace or industry through collective bargaining.

**Unions leverage the collective power of workers to balance out the power held by bosses and shareholders.**

## HOW DO DEVS BENEFIT FROM UNIONS?

In a contract negotiation, an employer's financial leverage lets them set the conditions of our labor. Workers can only counter this leverage by negotiating the terms of their contract collectively. The ability of a group of workers to disrupt production means employers cannot ignore the group's demands as easily as they might the requests of an individual.

**Unions are a tried and tested way for workers to fight back against exploitation and abuse.** Health insurance, overtime pay, parental and sick leave, and the forty-hour workweek are all the results of unions wielding collective power to demand that employers treat workers with dignity.

**As students,** we understand unions are the most effective way to win working conditions that respect **intrinsic human dignity.**

## THE STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

According to the **2018 GDC State of the Industry Survey**, the average career of a game worker **lasts only five years**, and fewer than half of respondents reported careers lasting over seven years. The reason? The game industry exploits its talented workers with long hours and unfair compensation. (<https://ubm.io/2nBi6Kp>)

Compared to other technical and creative industries, roles at major game studios are known for **lower wages, weak job security, and poor work-life balance.** Contract workers, who form the majority of games teams, face unstable careers without benefits or advancement.

These conditions are indefensible in an industry that generated over a hundred billion dollars of revenue in 2017. This bulk of this money goes to investors and executives, and not to the workers that generate it. (<https://bit.ly/2HMmL9C>)

Students form an integral part of the game industry and will direct its future. We will not defend an industry characterized by workplace discrimination, low wages, crunch, and short careers ending in burnout. Whether or not we are currently employed, we are still game workers, and we reject the unsustainable conditions endured by previous generations of developers. **The game industry is our industry, and we have the power to improve it.**

## IT BEGINS IN SCHOOLS

As students, we are already impacted by the industry's abuses.

- **Unpaid internships** give employers free labor and are not accessible to low-income students.
- **Entry-level jobs are framed as highly exclusive** and worth exploitation.
- Competition for visibility creates a **destructive crunch culture** that disregards privilege.
- **Women and students from marginalized communities face discrimination** from professors and classmates.
- **Pressure to develop a social media presence** exposes vulnerable students to harassment and abuse.
- **Underpaid student labor is exploited** by universities on research projects.

We love games and care deeply about realizing their potential. We shouldn't give up our future physical, mental, and financial well-being to achieve that.

We have **the right to stable careers** and **a dignified standard of living.** As student developers, we recognize **a unionized industry as the best bet for social and economic justice for game workers.**

*Worried about **crunch**?*

*Worried about race- and gender-based **exploitation and abuse**?*

*Worried about surviving financially while taking **unpaid internships**?*

*Worried about **unpaid design tests and deceptive spec work**?*

*Worried about **struggling to pay bills or lacking basic benefits like health insurance in the future**?*

■ **Share of income going to the top 10%**  
■ **Union membership**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Piketty and Saez (2013)

## **WHO ARE WE?**

**Game Workers Unite** is a broad-reaching organization that seeks to connect pro-union activists, exploited workers, and allies across borders and across ideologies in the name of building a **unionized game industry**.

We are building **pro-union solidarity** across disciplines, classes, and countries.

The organization is run exclusively by workers (non-employers), but we actively encourage employers, academics, and others to engage in the community and help support the organization's direct action efforts both materially and through their visibility.

**GAMEWORKERSUNITE.ORG**

**@GAMEWORKERS**



*Poor working conditions in the game industry have been making headlines for years now. But so far there's been little concrete action to actually address widespread issues like **unpaid internships, mass layoffs, or wages that are much lower than the rest of the tech sector. Unions are a tried and tested way for workers to fight back against exploitation and abuse.***

**Game Students, Unite!**