



SEIU Local 503

University of Oregon Sublocal 085

First Day of 2015-2017 Contract Bargaining

BY JOHNNY EARL, CHIEF BARGAINING DELEGATE

Union Brothers and Sisters:

The first day of the bargaining count down was last Monday January 26th. We are now in the 150-day window before we get to the point of Impasse. That means we are several months away from the point where we will have to bring in a mediator to help us work out some of the proposals from both sides.

There are a host of proposals that we will be giving Management at our first face-to-face meeting on February 12th and 13th at

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Local Focus

UO Police Department, SEIU Reach Contract

BY DENISE GARRETT, EUGENE STAFF ORGANIZER

Flash! After twelve months of bargaining, university police officers reached a tentative agreement on January 30. A ratification vote will be held in the first weeks of February.

This is the inaugural SEIU contract for our sworn police officers, who are the only strike-prohibited classified employees on campus. This contract increases starting pay to \$24.50/hour (8.4% increase), establishes predictable work schedules and protects overtime pay with limited exemptions for emergencies. Officers will receive differential pay for police certifications above basic, for accredited associate and bachelor's degrees,

and for special assignments like field training officer or firearms instructor.

Congratulations to bargaining representatives Officer Adam Lillengreen and Officer Allison Hart for hammering out this contract with the university. In the opinion of the author, Allison and Adam stuck together through this long and many times frustrating process. They worked hard to make sure this tentative agreement lays a strong foundation to build upon in future negotiations.

Congratulations to our newest members on their first contract. ■

Upcoming Events...



February 11th (Wednesday)
Local 085 Membership Meeting
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
 @ Many Nations Longhouse
 (1630 Columbia St.)

February 12th (Thursday)
Strike Hardship Fund Bake Sale
 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
 @ Duck Store (13th & Kincaid)

February 12th (Thursday)
Executive Committee Meeting
 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
 @ EMU, Alsea River Room

February 12th (Thursday)
Higher Ed Coalition Lobby Day
 @ Salem, OR Legislature

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The Strike Hardship and Member Needs Committee Meets The Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation or Personal Financial Stability is Nigh

BY CHUCK THEOBALD, SECRETARY

One of the duties of the Strike Hardship and Member Needs Committee is to inform members of resources available through community organizations. For several years we have focused on raising money for the strike hardship fund, and we have succeeded in growing the fund steadily.

With our hardship fund at a comfortable level, we are putting increased emphasis on the Member Needs part of our charter. To this end, we are reaching out to organizations in our community that may have resources that could benefit our members.

The committee recently met with Ross Kanaga, a representative from the Neighborhood Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO) in Springfield. Ross gave a comprehensive overview of NEDCO's history and the services available to community members. The main focus of NEDCO is helping people develop financial stability:

“Our mission is to build human and capital assets to strengthen neighborhoods and broaden participation in community ownership and governance.”

We fulfill our mission by helping our community find safe and affordable housing, develop and maintain solid businesses, and bring neglected neighborhoods back to vibrancy. We do dynamic, innovative work in order to help create a thriving community for everyone. ”

-- from: <http://nedcocdc.org/>

Operating in Lane, Clackamas and Marion counties, NEDCO makes available various tools toward these ends, including classes, lending services, business development and counseling. The core of these services is the Financial Foundations class, upon which other education is built.

One really exciting service is the Individual Development Account (IDA). This is a savings program lasting up to three years and is designed to develop people into life-long savers. The program offers a



3-to-1 match towards saving for a specific goal, such as further education, a first-time home purchase, or to start a business. Participants have several responsibilities which include 16 hours of education, tracking expenses, and committing to saving a certain amount each month. This sounds too good to be true, but true it is. To find out more, please contact NEDCO at 541-345-7106.

A recent KOIN article goes into more depth:

<http://koin.com/2015/01/28/state-program-gives-oregonians-free-money/>

We encourage all members to look into this and take advantage of these wonderful services. Certainly everyone could benefit from more personal finance education, and the IDA program is too good to pass up. The main message is that you can take control of your personal financial situation.

Stay tuned for more articles about services that NEDCO and other community organizations provide in future issues of the Local Focus. If you have suggestions for articles or any questions, please contact the author at theobald7@gmail.com.

Let's Ensure a Fair Shot for All

BY KURT WILLCOX, CHIEF GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATE &
THEODORA KO THOMPSON, VICE PRESIDENT



#503InItTogether
www.fairshotoregon.org

We've all seen the data about how inequality in the US and Oregon has been steadily increasing since the 1970s and is now at its worst levels since the 1920s. And even though the US economy has improved since the big 2008 recession, the news reports always point out that those rising indicators don't include wages.

We've all felt the squeeze on our wages and benefits in recent years. We also know there are lots of other people – family, friends and neighbors – who don't have jobs or union representation and who are doing even worse than we are.

In order to make the kind of changes that will reduce inequality and lift more of us up, it's clear we're going to have to do more than bargain a good contract with the universities. We're going to have to work together with other unions and with groups that have similar goals – and that's just what SEIU 503 is doing.

Our union has helped form a group of more than a dozen organizations called

Fair Shot for All that will pursue a common set of proposals at the Legislature this year and look to place several measures on the ballot in 2016. Here are the five key things we're working on:

Raise the Minimum Wage: \$18,925 a year isn't enough to raise a family. We're proposing raising it to \$15/hour, so more people can support their families without public assistance and so our communities and local businesses will receive the benefit of their spending.

Ensure All Oregonians Earn Paid Sick Days: 80% of people working in low-wage jobs have no access to sick leave. Eugene and Portland have passed ordinances giving workers in their areas a chance to stay home when they're sick without jeopardizing their jobs, but this option should be available to all workers. (Thanks to everyone who supported Eugene's Paid Sick Days!)

Make it Easier to Save for Retirement: One in six Oregonians age 45-65 has less

than \$5,000 in retirement savings. We need to find a simple way for employers to help workers save some of the money they earn for retirement.

End Profiling: Profiling or targeting people for investigation based on arbitrary factors such as race, religion, ethnicity, or national origin is both unjust and ineffective. Our goal is to end this practice.

Create Opportunities for People with Prior Convictions to Get Jobs - Ban the Box: Most employment applications include a box that people must check if they have ever been in prison, regardless of the crime or the fact that they have served their time. As a result, they don't get called for interviews and have a difficult time finding work. If this box were removed, more people would have a better shot at getting hired.

Learn more at: www.fairshotoregon.org

SHARE WITH US

Share with us how this matters to you. What are the conversations on these issues? What are your experiences? Stories of your experiences will help us make the case to the Legislature.

Send email to Theodora Ko Thompson (tthompson085@yahoo.com) with the subject: FAIRSHOT FOR ALL.

UO AND OUS

W-2 FORMS THIS YEAR

The 2014 W-2 Forms are scheduled to be mailed to employees' home address January 30, 2015. The unofficial W-2 Forms are now available on Duckweb in the *Employee Information Section, Tax Information*.

This year, some university employees will be issued two W-2s. Wages earned from 1/1/14 – 6/30/14 will be issued by the Oregon University System (OUS); wages earned during the second half of 2014 will be issued by the University of Oregon. Duplicate W-2s will not be available until late February.

Please contact payroll staff at 541-346-3151 with questions.

Events Calendar

FEBRUARY

* Indicates past events

February 4th (Wednesday) *
Contract Action Team (CAT) Meeting
Noon - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, South West Dining Room

February 11th (Wednesday)
Local 085 Membership Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ Many Nations Longhouse
(1630 Columbia St.)

February 12th (Thursday)
Strike Hardship Fund Bake Sale
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
@ Duck Store (13th & Kincaid)

February 12th (Thursday)
Executive Committee Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, Alsea River Room

February 12th (Thursday)
Higher Education Coalition Lobby Day
All Day
@ Salem, OR Legislature

February 12th & 13th (Thu-Fri)
SEIU 503 Bargaining
All Day
@ Western Oregon University

February 18th (Wednesday)
Stewards Council Meeting
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217
Only Union Stewards may attend.

February 19th (Thursday)
Strike Hardship Funds Committee
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ LISB, Room 217



February 25th (Wednesday)
Executive Committee Meeting
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217

February 26th & 27th (Thu-Fri)
SEIU 503 Bargaining
All Day
@ University of Oregon

MARCH

March 4th (Wednesday)
Contract Action Team (CAT) Meeting
Noon - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, South West Dining Room

March 5th & 6th (Thu-Fri)
SEIU 503 Bargaining
All Day
@ Portland State University

March 5th & 6th (Thu-Fri)
UO Board of Trustees Meeting
All Day
@ Ford Alumni Center

March 11th (Wednesday)
Local 085 Membership Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, Gumwood Room

March 12th (Thursday)
Executive Committee Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, Alsea River Room

March 18th (Wednesday)
Stewards Council Meeting
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217
Only Union Stewards may attend.

March 19th (Thursday)
Strike Hardship Funds Committee
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ LISB, Room 217

March 25th (Wednesday)
Executive Committee Meeting
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217

APRIL

April 1st (Wednesday)
Contract Action Team (CAT) Meeting
Noon - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, South West Dining Room

April 8th (Wednesday)
Local 085 Membership Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, Gumwood Room

April 15th (Thursday)
Executive Committee Meeting
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ EMU, Alsea River Room

April 22nd (Wednesday)
Stewards Council Meeting
5:00 pm - 6:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217
Only Union Stewards may attend.

April 23rd (Thursday)
Strike Hardship Funds Committee
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm
@ LISB, Room 217

April 29th (Wednesday)
Executive Committee Meeting
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
@ LISB, Room 217

The High Cost of Low Wages

BY KURT WILLCOX, CHIEF GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATE

A lot of us know what it's like to try to live on the earnings from a low-wage job. But what do we know about the low-wage workers in Oregon and the impacts their lack of income have on all of us? Well, the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the UO released a study about this and here are some of the things they found:

- They defined low-wage workers as those employed in occupations with a median wage of \$12/ hour or \$25,000/year. (That means half the people in the occupation made more than this amount and half made less.)
- By this measure, there are 400,000 Oregonians employed in low-wage work. That's out of a workforce of about 1.4 million or close to 30%.
- 75% of all low-wage workers are employed in five major occupation categories – Food Prep and Serving, Building and Grounds Cleaning, Health Care Support, Personal Care Services, and Sales and Retail.
- 45% of Latino workers and 50% of African-American workers are employed in low-wage industries. There are more women than men in low-wage jobs in Oregon.
- When so many people earn so little, the demand for public support services hits record levels. In Oregon, there are now over 1 million people receiving food stamps or other public assistance to feed and support their families – and many of them have jobs.
- Data from January 2014, for example, shows that 197,000 of the Oregonians receiving public assistance then had worked the previous year. The cost of providing them this assistance was \$1.7 billion a year. That's a cost we bear with our taxes, because their employers didn't pay

them a living wage.

- Most employers in the sectors employing workers who receive public assistance are large, profitable corporations.
- Oregon has one of the highest percentages of workers receiving state assistance and one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the country.

The full study is available at the LERC website: <http://lerc.uoregon.edu/> ■



BAKE SALE

the third annual SEIU Valentine's Day
Bake Sale



THURSDAY February 12th

10^{am} - 2^{pm}

the Duck Store on 13th & Kincaid
cupcakes | brownies | cookies
all proceeds benefit the Strike Hardship Fund

First Day of Bargaining

From Page 1

Western Oregon University. We will probably be bargaining at the University of Oregon on February 26th and 27th. Stay tuned for more details.

At the statewide Bargaining Conference on the 25th of January, your Bargaining Team informed the Bargaining Delegates of some of the proposals that we are considering. I can't list them all here, because we are still in discussion around them. We will share them with you around the same time we give them to Management. Here's a little of what I can share. We are going to be asking for an increase in the COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment), an increase in the minimum wages of all new employees, and other clarifications in contract language about better working conditions.

Throughout the State of Oregon six other contracts with SEIU-represented employees are up for negotiation at the same time. There is a common theme in each bargaining campaign: How do we raise the lowest paid workers for any of the State

Agencies up to a point where their small wages don't make them eligible for public services such as food stamps. We are calling this statewide campaign "Fair Shot Oregon." Let's raise the wage floor for everyone. More details coming at the Local Meeting. (*Editor's note: See article page 3.*)

There is some good news and bad news coming up on the horizon. It looks like state revenues will be enough above the projected amount that there will be a personal kicker rebate this year. On the one hand, this means many of us will be getting a check from the State. On the other hand, this means the Legislature will have to cut \$300-400 million from the state budget. And that means that some of the money that may have been earmarked for Higher Education would have to be cut. Furthermore, inside the Governor's Budget as it stands now, there isn't any money for a classified employee's Step increase - the same problem we faced just a year ago. Over the last week throughout the State, Union members have been meeting with their local State Senators and Representatives to inform them of these factors.

Now that the 2015 Bargaining Campaign has begun, each one of us has to be asking ourselves: Are we willing to do whatever is possible to win a Fair Contract? We have been behind in wages for years and the workload has only increased. Respect and wage equity go hand in hand. We have been disrespected time and time again when others (Administrators) received wage increases and we were furloughed. It is time that we get included in the prosperity of some of our universities.

I remember last year when some of the schools said that if we bargained directly with them, they could make up the differences in wages. Well, if you didn't notice what bargaining with them looked like, ask the Graduate Teaching Assistants if they wanted to be on the picket line for eight days. So to each of you I say, "We are in this together." And please remember that contracts are not won at the bargaining table; they are won at the rallies and by engaging our co-workers about the issues we are facing.

In it together. ■

In a Strike Situation, Who's in Charge?

BY KURT WILLCOX, NONFACULTY STAFF MEMBER OF UO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) went on strike a few months ago after the university refused to sign off on a sick leave compromise that the GTFF had agreed to. This caused a good deal of speculation about who was responsible for the breakdown. Was it President Scott Coltrane? Was it Board Chair Chuck Lillis? And what role did the new Board of Trustees play?

Officially, President Coltrane was in charge. That's because, early last year, the Board delegated authority for all collective bargaining activity to the university president. Aside from acknowledging that he kept the Board Chair informed, President Coltrane has indicated that he was responsible for the university's actions during negotiations.

Even though I am a member of the Board, I can't offer any "insider" insight into this situation, because the faculty trustee and nonfaculty staff trustee are

prohibited by law from taking part in any Board discussions or actions involving collective bargaining on their campuses. I can, however, say there were no formal meetings late in negotiations where the Board as a group would have been in a position to learn about or impact the decision-making that led to the strike.

This seems wrong to me. Regardless of how you view the issues that were in dispute, the strike itself, or the fact that President Coltrane had been delegated to conduct negotiations, at the end of the day the Board of Trustees is now legally responsible for the operation of the university. It can't take a "hands-off" approach to such critical situations. A strike, after all, is not just a disagreement between the administration and a group of unionized employees; it can have much wider consequences. As we saw, this strike seriously disrupted the lives of thousands of students, caused a major dispute with faculty over grading

authority, divided the campus and greater communities, and might even have affected the university's search for a new president and its \$2 billion Capital Campaign.

From a "good government" perspective, I believe our Board of Trustees needs to be formally involved at some level before any strike occurs at the UO. There is too much at stake for it not to. That's why I'm asking the Board to pass a resolution at its meeting in March that would require formal information sharing and consultation between the university president and Board members during the end stages of bargaining when negotiations have broken down. My intent is not to take decision-making authority away from the university president, but to ensure that any decisions are made with the active awareness of the Board. Giving the Board such a role will not necessarily settle contracts or prevent strikes, but it should clarify who's in charge at this critical time. ■

An Opportunity Agenda for Oregon

BY KURT WILLCOX, CHIEF GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATE

Tina Kotek, Speaker of the Oregon House and a member of the Legislature from NE Portland, spoke at the City Club of Eugene on January 16. She described a series of policy goals that she called an Opportunity Agenda for Oregon, which she hopes this year's Legislature will adopt.

Kotek began by noting that the data shows that 1 in 3 working families in Oregon is struggling to meet its basic needs. Given the improving economic picture in our state, this is something she says we simply must all work to change. Kotek's Opportunity Agenda includes three basic areas of emphasis:

Expanding Opportunity: The focus here is on strengthening our system of public education. She wants to ensure that K-12 schools are funded sufficiently, including full-day kindergarten. College education and training opportunities must be affordable and accessible. Working families need access to affordable, high-quality child care.

Rewarding Work: The goal here is to ensure that the jobs available in Oregon allow people to get ahead, not just get by. Full-time workers should not be living in poverty. They should have access to paid time off to take care of themselves and their families. And workers should be able to save money – to buy a house, send a child to college, or save for retirement.

Ensuring Fairness: The basic intent here is to create a level playing field, so everyone can have a fair shot at prosperity. This includes things like equal pay for equal work and supporting small businesses and new entrepreneurs. It also means providing more affordable housing and ensuring that every community has access to high-quality health care.

During the question and answer period, Speaker Kotek addressed a number of issues:

Minimum Wage: She expects the Legislature will raise it, but can't say at this point by how much.



Tina Kotek, Speaker of Oregon House

Higher Ed Funding: She says K-12 schools got an increase in funding in 2013 and she expects the Legislature will prioritize a funding increase for higher education

in 2015. This would include financial aid funding to ensure Oregonians can attend.

Sustainable Revenue: She acknowledged that, even with an improving economy, Oregon will need a sizable new revenue stream to completely rebuild its education system and update its infrastructure. But she said that will take a vote of the people, which would occur in 2016 at the earliest. ■

Job Coping Skills

BY DOROTHY KARSTROM, MEMBER

At the risk of sounding too “Care Bear”, if I can help even one new or burned-out person cope with their employment, I'm going for it. I interviewed a co-worker who has been here 20+ years, and is known for keeping a level head and good attitude. I have learned a few things on my own over 9 years here, but I wanted to know how he does it. For the purpose of this article, he will be called Walter.

Dorothy: What can you tell me about how you keep going here?

Walter: When I first got hired, there was a woman who had been here a long time, and at first I thought she was a bit eccentric. Then I noticed she seemed to keep focused and not let all the craziness of this place get to her. I thought, how did she make it here 25 years? I watched her and saw she seemed to keep it all in perspective, like she just observed but didn't

react. Like she seemed to have a quiet place inside.

Dorothy: What about issues with bosses and co-workers?

Walter: I have seen problem people come and go. Things change. Something you may be really struggling with can be gone in 6 months or a year, for various reasons. The point is, you stay and ride it out. The problem might be huge to you now, but may not mean anything later on.

Dorothy: I know your music is very important, that you play in two bands. Would you say this is a big part of how you cope with the job?

Walter: It is very important. If I went home after work and just watched TV, I don't think I would have made it this long.

Sometimes it feels like working here is like being in an alternate reality. There is a huge lack of communication, at least in the area where I work. I have seen good employees lose their job when the combination of other stressors and work are

too much, while there are people still here in management positions that I wouldn't hire.

The big take-away for me is that you have to keep a sense of yourself. Family is important, of course. If you don't already have something you love to do, find it. Two years ago I started writing, and it felt like that was what I was supposed to do. I took two classes and loved them. I find that I spend a whole lot less time stressing about work now. I catch myself and redirect. I go to work with a different attitude now, because it gives me ideas to write about. ■



Will You Stay Silent? NO!

BY CARLA MCNELLY, PRESIDENT

In early January our Custodial Staff in Campus Operations was presented with a memo meant to silence them. One whole shift of Custodians was asked to sign an attendance sheet verifying that they heard and understood the memo. While trying to create a respectful workplace, this memo is an example of a hostile work environment. When confronted with this, Campus Operations pulled the memo right away. On Tuesday, February 3rd, managers went to the Custodial Staff to apologize for presenting them with the memo.

According to the US Constitution, we all have freedom of speech. The University of Oregon has a very strong policy on freedom of speech that protects all employees, including Classified Staff. It is against OARs (Oregon Administrative Rules) for a supervisor to tell individuals what they can or cannot say. It is an ULP (Unfair Labor Practice – federal labor law) for management to tell employees they cannot speak up about their managers. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on national origin for any institution receiving federal funding. Therefore, providing an English-only version may also be in violation of this federal law.

Will you stay silent? NO! Reach out to the Custodians today! Let them know that their voice matters too! Help us undo the oppressive actions of management that were meant to silence them. Thank the Custodians in your building today for their hard work and contribution to making the UO function!

If you are a target of a bully boss, witness management breaking the law, or feel silenced in the workplace, there are resources available to you. Tell a Steward or the UO Ombuds. Will you stay silent? NO! ■

- Steward Hotline 541-346-0321
- UO Ombuds 541-346-6400

SEIU 503's Top Higher Education Priorities at the Legislature

BY KURT WILLCOX, CHIEF GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATE

The 2015 Oregon Legislature has just begun meeting. Among the many issues our union is working on are three that are very important to those of us connected with higher education.

Provide Greater Funding for Higher Education: We all know that Oregon has been disinvesting in higher education for quite some time and that the big recession from 2008 made things even worse. So, getting more money into the state's higher education budget is a top priority for SEIU 503. This will help fund our wages and benefits, but it will also keep student costs down and allow the universities to make needed investments.

We're working with students, faculty, and administrators at the UO, the other universities, and the community colleges to try to make this happen. We want legislators to budget \$755 million in 2015-17 for the seven universities. That would match the \$693 million they allocated to us in 2007-09 and provide \$62 million to maintain the current tuition freeze for another two years. So far, the governor and key legislators have proposed funding levels in the \$626 – 635 million range, which is much better than the current biennium's total of \$523 million, but not enough to provide the resources we, our students, and the faculty need.

In addition, SEIU 503 is telling legislators that this extra funding needs to go toward student services, not more managers or higher administrative salaries. We want the state to invest in classroom in-

struction and teaching assistants; support services for students, such as library staff, food services, and advising programs; and classified services that maintain buildings, grounds, and safety.

Improve Employee to Supervisor Staffing Ratios: In order to make the best use of available resources, we believe that all universities need to emphasize front-line workers providing direct services to students, rather than continue to increase the number of administrators and supervisors. As a result, we're urging the Legislature to require the seven universities to maintain an overall ratio of 7 employees to 1 supervisor. According to data supplied by the universities, that ratio is currently about 3 employees to 1 supervisor.

State workers in DAS pushed this kind of reform in 2011 and ended up with legislation that requires state agencies to make progress every year in working toward an employee to supervisor ratio of 11 to 1. (Most started in the range of 5 or 6 employees to 1 supervisor.) We know there are differences in the way services are delivered at state agencies and universities, but those differences don't justify such a great disparity in supervisor to employee ratios. We think a 7 to 1 ratio is a realistic goal and we're working to get the Legislature's agreement.

Continue Existing Shared Services Among Universities: When the law creating institutional boards passed in 2013, the Legislature required the seven univer-

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SEIU LOCAL 085

JANUARY 31, 2015

Treasurer's Summary 2014-2015

	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	Description
Revenue	17,438.00	4,239.55	Rebates
Expenses	11,750.00	2,961.50	Local Meetings
	767.00	0.00	Workshops
	2,210.00	515.04	Newsletter
	1,551.00	1,334.25	Other
Total Budget	16,278.00	4,810.79	Expense Total

REFLECTIONS ON A JOB DESCRIPTION & RETIRING WITH DIGNITY, FEBRUARY 3, 2015**THE CLASSIFIED/UNION EMPLOYEE VERSION****BY STAR HOLMBERG, RETIRED MEMBER**

Dear Local 085 Classified Employees:
Every University of Oregon classified employee who has given years of service deserves to retire with dignity. I have learned first hand, however, that this is sometimes easier said than done. Oh sure, the Department of Human Resources provides guidance through the process of retirement. And one receives kind wishes and gifts from fellow staff and faculty. Plus, if one is fortunate to have served students, their sweet goodbyes are without parallel. In the case of my retirement they were the ones who conveyed the most profound sense of appreciation and impending loss as I readied to depart.

But, alas, there was a long shadow cast upon my retirement. Had I been a more compliant clerical worker and less savvy about the havoc that can be generated by ad hoc administrative methods, having an out-of-date classified job description probably wouldn't have bothered me.

When I retired on December 1st, 2013 I left behind a 2010 job description for the Graduate Coordinator in Computer and Information Science (CIS). Yet, even that version of it was not as I thought it should be. From at least 2007 forward, at intervals, I tried to convince the Department that my GTF contract-related responsibilities needed serious revision. Finally, in June 2012, the Graduate School wrote a letter to the CIS Department that outlined recommendations on how to improve the timeliness of GTF pay. It was suggested in the letter that the tasks of payroll paperwork and the generation of GTF contracts be the responsibility of the same employee. This would mean a change to my job description, regardless of which employee shouldered those tasks.

Overjoyed by that letter (which my supervisor shared with me and our fiscal manager), I had some hope that an open discussion about my job description would take place between the Department, my union steward and me. But the Interim Department Head chose not to participate in such a meeting. Even though his efforts to administer CIS improvements

to curriculum and the promotion of faculty research were stellar and progressive, he told me to take up my job description with the next Department Head. That permanent Faculty position was unfilled for the remainder of my U.O. employment (nearly one and a half more years). And while the Interim Head wrote in an email that he had no problem with my supervisor meeting with my union steward, he assured that there would be no approval of any change to my job description.

A bit of historical irony is that in years past, when I was the SEIU Local 085 (U.O.) Bargaining Rep at the Oregon University System (OUS) table, the CIS Department was remarkably accommodating. Leave for bargaining travel was willingly granted; and I always felt respected for my work on behalf of classified employees. But back then I was not bringing my own personal labor dispute to the Department's doorstep, like I started doing in 2012. Perhaps the greatest irony, however, was that a job which required excessive computer use was not being transparently discussed by a Computer Science Department. While GTF pay-related tasks handled in an inefficient manner were the greatest source of embarrassment for me, the impact of the University's changing technologies and the ever-growing volume of online expectations were not accurately reflected in my job description.

I felt so uncomfortable with my work environment in my last months at the U.O., I declined having a department-wide party to honor my retirement. For I knew I was incapable of acting like I was retiring with dignity. Likewise, I passed on the University's group retirement event, primarily to avoid access to a microphone. For the truth of my heart, if uttered aloud, would likely have ruined the event for many attendees.

Please note that all of the above is only part of the story. For example, I know that the Union has the right to require a department to do an annual classified performance evaluation, and that can prompt an update to the job description. There

were at least two versions of my performance evaluation in my last year at the U.O.; but neither of them merited my signature, based on inaccuracies and issues from further than a year back. And besides, I was mentally headed for the door.

Another part of the story, a disturbing verbal exchange that finalized my decision to retire, is only included in the Administrative version of this piece. This is because some union brothers and sisters would be offended, and I do not want to detract from the key messages I wish to convey here.

Classified job descriptions are very important. I strongly advise that you take care of yours as soon as you feel it does not reflect reality, it is too heavily weighted and/or some element of your job brings you shame. Seek the help of your union as soon as the first red flag goes up. Just like retiring with dignity, however, I know that this is easier said than done. With some departments the only way to salvage one's self esteem may be to seek another position on campus or retire. But my union experience precludes me from believing this is true for all departments.

So here for your consideration are some of the things I would have done differently, were I able (or wanted) to relive my U.O. employment: I'd have taken more of the breaks I was entitled to, kept a more detailed log of the variables impacting my work environment, gone to Human Resources with my union steward much sooner (and more often), cared less about who I might anger by more overtly calling attention to my own labor issues, even allowed a fellow union officer to organize a protest on my behalf. I would have been far less inclined to rescue, fix, or over achieve in response to what I perceived as administrative deficiencies, and more focused on healthy boundaries.

I would have taken better care of my self. I encourage you to do the same for your selves.

**In Solidarity and with Dignity,
Star Holmberg** ■

University of Oregon SEIU Local 085 Stewards

UO Steward Hotline

541-346-0321

Call the Local 085 Steward message line if you have questions about a work problem, possible contract violation, or need help with a disciplinary issue. Leave your name, phone number, and brief description of the problem.

Messages are collected daily. A steward will call you back.

Weingarten Rights: Your Right to Representation

If, on any occasion, your boss or supervisor calls you into a meeting and you believe that this meeting might reasonably result in discipline against you, you have the right to be accompanied in that meeting by a union steward or representative of your union. Request your right to representation if you are ever in a meeting in this situation.



HOW TO FIND THE CONTRACT

Spiral Bound

If you would like a printed, spiral-bound copy of the 2013-2015 SEIU Local 503 / Oregon University System (OUS) Collective Bargaining Agreement (aka the latest Contract), please ask a CAT (Contract Action Team member) or a Steward.

PDF on the Web

- Go to the SEIU 503 Website: www.seiu503.org.
- Click "All Contracts" under "Quick Links" at end of page.
- Click "OUS 2013-15" link at the top right.



Third Annual St. Valentine's Day Strike Hardship Fund-Raiser

The Strike Hardship and Member Needs Committee is hosting a bake sale to raise funds for our Local strike hardship fund. Bargaining has officially begun and proposals will soon be on the table. While we hope that the new University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE) will be reasonable and agree to terms that honour and respect the contributions that Classified staff make to the running of our Oregon Universities, we must be prepared for the possibility that we will be forced to strike. This bake sale will raise funds that will be used to assist members who suffer financial hardship as a result of a strike.

By the time you read this, we may have enough bakers and table staffers, but please visit <http://goo.gl/KBx2Kh> to see if there are spaces available.

If you can't volunteer, please stop by the table outside the UO Duck Store at 13th and Kincaid to chat, fill out a Valentine's Day greeting to President Coltrane, and pick up some goodies for you and your sweetie.

Current Stewards

John Ahlen, Chief Steward
International Affairs, 6-1422

John Anthony
Campus Operations, 6-1527

Michael Barr
EMU

Sara Clark
EMU, 6-0848

Lauradel Collins
Computer and Info. Science, 6-1389

Michael Drake
Police Department, 6-2919

Johnny Earl
Campus Operations, 6-2294

Gary Malone
Campus Operations, 6-2215

Carla McNelly
Journalism and Communication,
6-1229

Sue Martinez
University Food Services

Michael Omogrosso
University Housing, 6-5594

John Taylor
UO Libraries, 6-1865

Chuck Theobald
Lewis Neuroimaging, 6-0343

Theo Ko Thompson
Admissions, 6-1301

Kirk Wilcox
Campus Operations, 6-2188

Candice Woyak
Campus Operations

Lois Yoshishige
Business Affairs, 6-1251

MEET YOUR FRIENDLY EHS CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES

BY GWYNN DANIELS, ENVIRONMENT HEALTH & SAFETY DIRECTOR

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) serves as a resource for employees to help prevent work-associated injuries or adverse health effects. Our goal is to ensure that every employee leaves work each day as healthy as they arrived. These classified employees are here to help you with your questions or concerns about safety. EHS staff provides guidance, assistance, evaluation of regulatory compliance, and incident response for all safety programs.



Ben Carlson is a temporary employee in the Occupational Health & Safety group and can help you with safety training and consultation for confined space entry, fall protection, lockout/tagout, hazard communication, ladder safety, overhead lift safety, forklift safety, arc flash safety, driver safety, tunnel safety, and propane dispensing. Ben also performs accident/incident investigations.



Jeremy Chambers works in the Environmental Programs group, but also provides some Occupational Health & Safety services. He can help you with questions about UO's clean air/water/soil permits, the management program, and respiratory protection (evaluation, training, fit testing).



Craig Biersdorff works in the Environmental Programs group, and is an expert on proper disposal of hazardous chemicals, universal waste (fluorescent tubes, batteries, etc.) and bio-hazard waste.

your safety records, and ensures everything is running smoothly in the EHS office.



Mike Eldredge works in the Environmental Programs group and can help you with concerns related to asbestos and/or lead containing materials. Mike does assessment, awareness training, evaluation of regulatory compliance and incident response.



Adam Jones works in the Occupational Health & Safety group and can help you with hearing conservation, indoor air quality, mold evaluation and remediation, and chemical exposure monitoring. Adam also does job hazard analysis and accident/incident investigations.



Steve Stuckmeyer works in the Research Safety group. He can help you with chemical and lab safety, chemical inventory and SDSs, chemical fume hoods/safety showers/eyewash stations, and hazardous materials shipping.

Other services offered by EHS include: Bloodborne pathogens/Biological safety, the Occupational Health Program for people who work with or around research animals, and radiation/X-ray/laser safety.

And remember... Safety Every day Is the Union way!

Top Higher Ed Priorities

From Page 8

sities to continue sharing three basic services – collective bargaining (which is why we classified employees continue negotiating as one group), health insurance and retirement (which is why we are all still in PEBB and PERS), and risk management (which allows the universities to purchase liability insurance as a group). The universities set up an organization called the University Shared Services Enterprise (USSE) to coordinate these three services for them, which is why we are bargaining with USSE this year.

Unfortunately, this requirement for sharing services sunsets on June 30, 2015. The university presidents are proposing that only collective bargaining be shared after that point. Some of them clearly want the ability to set up their own health insurance and risk management programs and some may even be interested in establishing a different retirement system.

We're glad they're not opposing our efforts to continue bargaining with the classified employees at the other universities, but dropping the other shared services would not be good for classified employees or the smaller universities, so our union is lobbying the Legislature to extend the current shared services arrangement for at least 6 more years. We have introduced a bill, HB 2611, to accomplish this.



Support the Bargaining Team!

Local FOCUS

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