

LOCAL FOCUS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER SEIU LOCAL 503 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SUB-LOCAL 085

FREE TO \$3 HOUSING TO REDUCE MEAL BENEFIT

By *Aaron Montoya*, editor

UO Housing plans to take away a long-held benefit from people who work with the department—free meals. University Housing Director Michael Griffel outlined the plan during a meeting in Carson Hall Monday, May 9.

Come September, dining employees stand to lose their one free meal per shift—they are to pay \$1 per meal. All other housing employees discounts are to decrease by the same amount—their meals are to cost a dollar more at \$3 per meal. Four months later dining employees are to lose what will remain of their relative discount and pay \$3 per meal as well.

The proposal to reduce housing workers meal discount is a pay cut that could amount to more than \$1,000 per year for a worker who depends on that benefit, some said during the meeting. A group of about twenty people voiced their concerns to Griffel. Nearly all are members of the Service Employees International Union and some work for the housing department.

Dining employees are some of the lowest-paid. On the low end, cashiers and food service workers start out making \$11.73 per hour. Most positions' pay tops out around \$15, and the highest paid among them is the food service coordinator—people with that job can make \$21.42 per hour after a decade with the university.

The unilateral nature of the proposal makes it a violation of the contract by which the university and our union are bound, they said. David Pinsonneault, an SEIU organizer who works with UO members, addressed those concerns in a May 3 letter to the head of UO employee and labor relations Wes Fowler.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

KEY ■ MEETING

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

May 25—Wednesday

5–7 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

CONTACT ACTION TEAM (CAT)

June 1—Wednesday

Noon–1 p.m.—Straub 254

Lunch provided

LOCAL 085 MEMBERSHIP

June 8—Wednesday

Noon–1 p.m.

Ford Alumni Center 403

Lunch provided

STEWARDS COUNCIL

June 15—Wednesday

5–7:30 p.m.

Only stewards, please

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

STRIKE HARDSHIP
FUND COMMITTEE

June 16—Thursday

Noon–1 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

June 22—Wednesday

5–7 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

CONTACT ACTION TEAM

July 6—Wednesday

Noon–1:30 p.m.

Erb Memorial Union

Alsea River Room

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

WHAT UO BUYS

HIGHER ED UNIONS, SUPPORTERS TALK VISION, COLLABORATION

by **Kurt Willcox**, non-faculty staff rep.
UO Board of Trustees

On Saturday, April 2, a group of about 50 staff, faculty, and students from around Oregon met in Eugene to develop a common vision for the future of higher education in Oregon. An interesting highlight was discussion about how our universities spend money. Expenditures, of course, tell us a lot about an organization's priorities.

Participants were unanimous about coordinating our efforts in support of the A Better Oregon petition and in the 2017 legislative session. Most of our time was devoted to discussing

- what Oregon higher ed should look like,
- who it should serve,
- how it should treat its employees,
- where money to fund it should come from,
- and how it should be spent.

A steering committee made up of representatives from the sponsoring organizations should develop a concrete plan from the discussions and convene a follow-up meeting during summer or fall. State Senator Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) spoke about the state's budget situation. People from each of the sponsoring groups provided short updates on the challenges and concerns facing their members.

Nearly all universities and many community colleges were represented. Representatives of SEIU Local 085, the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, and United Academics of the UO attended. Sponsoring organizations included

- SEIU 503,
- Oregon Student Association,
- Oregon Education Association,
- American Federation of Teachers—Oregon,
- American Association of University Professors,
- and Association of Oregon Faculties. ■

2014 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON EXPENDITURES DISTRIBUTION

Numbers from audited financial statement provided by Howard Bunsis, a professor of accounting who teaches for Eastern Michigan University. His presentation "Update on the Financial Condition of the University of Oregon May, 2015" is available at local085.seiu503.org.

30.8%—INSTRUCTION

faculty pay, benefits, classroom supplies

21.3%—AUXILIARY ENTERPRISES

housing, dining, parking, athletics

8.6%—RESEARCH

includes external grants, internal spending

6.4%—INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

executive management, legal, public relations, governance

6.2%—ACADEMIC SUPPORT

deans, libraries, academic advising

6.0%—PHYSICAL PLANT

campus operations, maintenance, grounds, utilities, insurance

5.5%—ALL OTHER

4.6%—PUBLIC SERVICE

non-instructional service to external groups, conferences, institutes

4.3%—STUDENT SERVICES

non-instructional counseling, admissions, recruitment

4.2%—INTEREST

payments on financing—borrowing, bonds, etc.

2.1%—STUDENT AID

scholarships, fellowships, tuition waivers

100%—TOTAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

UNION, FOOD SERVICE WORKERS OPPOSE PLAN, OFFER ALTERNATIVES

"This new practice would have a clear negative economic impact on...employees...Article 5 of our collective bargaining agreement...states, 'The employer agrees that during the term of this Agreement it may not unilaterally change employee wages or hours.'...If you continue with this proposal, we intend to file a grievance."

Union representatives and workers were confused by the timing of the proposal, which they said should only take place during the next legal opportunity to negotiate the SEIU 085-UO contract. They drew a comparison to Oregon State University—union members said its contract with workers specifically addresses the same issue and that is proof that the benefit changes should be bargained. If they intend to take away a \$3 benefit per shift, the parties should bargain for alternate compensation for workers, Steward Lauradel Collins said.

Housing Director Michael Griffel defended the move as a matter of business. He cited increased food costs and explained that the new charges to employees are a reality check.

"It's to try to cover the food costs," Griffel said. "Right now, we are behind."

He stressed that the decision is emotionally and politically difficult and acknowledged the financial burden on workers.

"[The proposal] increases expenses—I know that," Griffel said. "It is a hard, unpleasant

thing to do...Our goal is for students to not cover the food costs [of our employees]."

People who work for housing relied on the meal discount benefit as compensation for decades—the department last modified the policy during 1999. The union and the university both took the discounts into consideration during bargaining to set wages for those years, Pinsonneault said. That includes



[The proposal] increases expenses—I know that. It is a hard, unpleasant thing to do.

Michael Griffel
Director of University Housing



the wages housing workers earn now, which the parties negotiated and set during 2015. The next contract negotiation opportunity is scheduled for 2017.

Many of the people concerned suggested that the university cut other costs. Reduce food waste—that could save money and spare workers.

Griffel said that Housing currently works hard to achieve efficiency and cost-savings with respect to food waste. He agreed that he and his colleagues should explore alternatives.

"There's lots of other cost

reductions that we need to look at," Griffel said.

Union representative Pinsonneault suggested that people who are administrators should involve affected workers in the decision-making process regarding issues such as removing meal discount benefits.

Griffel explained that the series of three open meetings he hosted, one of which was underway during his comment, are opportunities for people who work with housing to provide feedback about the proposal.

Some food service workers said their supervisors presented the changes as inevitable.

"It shouldn't be presented as a done deal," Griffel said, emphasizing that the plan is a proposal at this point. He first notified workers during early April via an all-staff email list, he said. Some said they were not in receipt.

In addition to the financial burden, workers anticipate a negative effect on morale. Bob James, a food service worker with the UO for 22 years, said he and his colleagues treat the free meal like a family meal and feel similarly about it.

"I care about the family," James said, referencing his co-workers. "Mom never said 'That'll be three dollars.' The university has always been able to feed and provide for its family," James said.

Union members plan to deliver a petition to University Housing Director Michael Griffel to drop the proposal. ■

SUPPORT STRUCTURE

YOUR UNION SUB-LOCAL CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION SUB-LOCAL 085 AT UO AND THE DUTIES OF THEIR ELECTED POSITIONS FOLLOW—PLEASE CONTACT US.

All officers commit to the following.

- Serve two-year terms
- Attend committee meetings
- Serve on executive committee, vote

PRESIDENT
THEODORA
KO
THOMPSON

pres085@gmail.com

- › Host member meetings
- › Inform executive committee
- › Attend district meetings—report
- › Appoint committee members
- › Befriend unions, community
- › Manage sub-local progress
- › Bargain

CHIEF CONTACT
LOIS
YOSHISHIGE

loisy085@comcast.net

- › Manage Contact Action Team
- › Manage member database
- › Host CAT meetings
- › Plan campus actions

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
VACANT

- › Advise president
- › Serve on committees
- › Uniquely valuable
- › May also be officer
- › Tie-breaking vote

john.taylor.seiu503@gmail.com

CHIEF STEWARD
JOHN
TAYLOR

- › Host grievance committee meetings
- › Enforce collective bargaining agreement
- › Host steward meetings
- › Meet obligations of CBA and union rules
- › Report violations, concerns

VICE-PRESIDENT
JOHNNY
EARL

johnnyearl59@yahoo.com

- › Represent president if required
- › Replace an absent president
- › Collaborate with Chief Contact, activists, attend Contact Action Team meetings
- › Assist the president
- › Manage union bulletin boards
- › Member of SEIU Local 503 Higher Education Council—report
- › Plan, execute campus actions
- › Host informational meetings

z_benedict@hotmail.com

SECRETARY
ZACHARY
BENEDICT

- › Record meeting minutes, distribute to committee members
- › Arrange, execute meetings

TREASURER
MELANIE
JACKSON

eagleviewranch@gmail.com

- › Manage financial records
- › Manage requests to use chapter money
- › Maintain budget, report quarterly

MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZER

GARY MALONE

garymalone1@yahoo.com

- › Recruit, retain members
- › Assist development of contact action team
- › Manage membership information
- › Present during employee orientation
- › Invite fair share members to commit
- › Host membership committee meetings

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

AARON MONTOYA

seiu085editor@gmail.com

- › Publish newsletter
- › Host newsletter committee meetings

CHIEF GENERAL COUNCIL DELEGATE

LAURADEL COLLINS

lauradelc@gmail.com

- › Prepare general council delegates
- › Collaborate with delegates to report back
- › Prepare delegates' general council resolutions

CHIEF BARGAINING DELEGATE

JOHNNY EARL

johnnyearl59@yahoo.com

- › Bargain, represent local bargaining priorities
- › Host bargaining committee meetings
- › Report on bargaining
- › Collaborate with back-up
- › Attend regional bargaining strategy meetings

STRIKE HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

DOROTHY ATTNEAVE

LYDIA HARLAN

CRAIG KOHARCHICK

LINDA SAPPINGTON

JASON STONE

CHUCK THEOBALD

- › 10 elected members
- › Manage hardship fund, help striking members
- › Only striking members can access fund
- › Connect community aid organizations with members in need
- › Grow hardship fund
- › Inform members about fund, use rules
- › Facilitate members' hardship requests
- › Advise executive committee on fund use
- › Inform members of community resources

STEWARDS

JOHN AHLEN

JOHN ANTHONY

MICHAEL BARR

JOE BLACK

LAURADEL COLLINS

JOHNNY EARL

JULIA HAVENS

MARTHA HURST

THEODORA KO

THOMPSON

GARY MALONE

AARON MARTIN

RANDY MCCUTCHEN

MICHAEL OMOGROSSO

JOHN TAYLOR

CHUCK THEOBALD

DAVE VILLALOBOS

KURT WILLCOX

LISA WIMBERLY

CANDIC WOYAK

LOIS YOSHISHIGE

- › Represent employees during grievance
- › Enforce collective bargaining agreement
- › Facilitate action in response to member feedback
- › Official training required
- › Attend stewards meetings

EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES

DIVERSITY HELPS US BE STRONG, RESILIENT, UNSTOPPABLE

by *Theodora Ko Thompson,*
president

May 20–24, with members of the SEIU 503 board, I plan to join hundreds of delegates from across the U.S. at the International Convention of the Service Employees International Union in Detroit, Michigan. Ten years ago, I participated in a General Council meeting for the first time. The theme was “Voice. Vision. Victory.” That was my first experience of American democracy in action and what unions in the workplace mean for working families across America. I learned how the work of union people made meaningful contributions to building the middle class and how critically relevant those contributions are to working families today.

In General Council through voices of delegates who participate in the International Convention, you get to experience what being part of a union truly means. You hear conviction in the voices of members who share personal stories that help us empathize with the struggles of all our brothers and sisters. You connect with their passion to educate all of us—to emphasize our inherent person-hood. Their stories help unite us as we choose to stand together, for each other, for our families and for our communities.

I value the voices and connections we make as partici-

pants in General Council—the voices of agreement and disagreement that showcase our rich diversity of backgrounds. I value the collective experiences and wisdom of women and men who tell others how belonging to a union made a difference in their lives and why union protection matters. The resolutions at which we arrive as voting delegates will be vital to ensuring the future we seek for working families.

Throughout my life, I found that it is the voices of those who are different from me and the experiences they share that are the most valuable learning experiences. Through SEIU, I have the opportunity to connect with leaders and activists whose experiences are different from mine—those are the stories that help me understand better how the fabric of our collective experiences weaves together to make us stronger.

We convene in General Council to give voice to our challenges and to the legacy of discrimination and a social construct that divides “us” vs “them.” Yet it is due to our resilient struggle together that we celebrate victories today.

- Our collaboration with allies and community partners to in the Fair Shot For All legislative agenda
- Our work to provide opportunities for all by uniting the voices that speak out

against inequalities

- Passage of a landmark minimum wage law that makes Oregon the first state to mandate more pay for city workers and for those in rural areas
- SB 454 paid sick leave
- HB 3025 “Ban the Box”
- HB 2002 prohibits profiling
- HB 2960 makes it easier to save for retirement

Today, our collective effort to fund schools and public services is called A Better Oregon. Parents, teachers, small businesses, leaders and organizations are together, creating a ballot initiative that can ensure large out-of-state corporations pay their fair share in taxes.

The voices that members hear during the SEIU International Convention should be passionate and strong with conviction. American democracy is rich and vibrant there and union delegates unite to passionately meet challenges. We remain strong to achieve victories for working families.

We are strong when we voice the racial and economic injustices that people perpetuate in our communities. We are strong when we embrace difficult issues. We are strong when we unite in solidarity with one another with a common purpose. Unity is strength, and it demonstrates our commitment to a fair, equitable, inclusive and just society. ■

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

KEY ■ MEETING

LOCAL 085 MEMBERSHIP

July 13—Wednesday

Noon–1 p.m.

Location to be announced

Lunch provided

STEWARDS COUNCIL

July 20—Wednesday

5–7:30 p.m.

Only stewards, please

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

STRIKE HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

July 21—Thursday

Noon–1 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

July 27—Wednesday

5–7 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

CONTACT ACTION TEAM

Aug. 3—Wednesday

Noon–1:30 p.m.

Erb Memorial Union—Alsea River Room

LOCAL 085 MEMBERSHIP

Aug. 10—Wednesday

Noon–1 p.m.

Lunch provided

STEWARDS COUNCIL

Aug. 17—Wednesday

5 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

Only stewards, please

Lewis Integrated Science Building 217

STRIKE HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

Aug. 18—Thursday

Noon–1 p.m.

Lewis Integrated Science Building 217

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Aug. 24—Wednesday

5–7 p.m.

Lewis Integrated Science Building 217

THANK YOU RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS

Thank you to the members who volunteered to greet people who accepted classified positions working with the university during New Employee Orientation.

- ★ Jason Stone
- ★ Lauradel Collins
- ★ Dorothy Attneave
- ★ Zach Benedict
- ★ Theodora Ko Thompson
- ★ Nicole Nelson
- ★ Gary Malone

Thank you to the people voiced opposition to the meal benefit take-away and the people who attended the housing meetings during the week of May 9 to support our brothers and sisters.

- ★ Lauradel Collins
- ★ Dorothy Attneave
- ★ Zach Benedict
- ★ Theodora Ko Thompson
- ★ Johnny Earl
- ★ Bob James
- ★ Donnie
- ★ Chris Daugenti
- ★ Antonio Loza

HELLO, 085 AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

It is with respect and excitement that I take responsibility for the newsletter operation of SEIU 085—thank you for choosing me. I look forward to helping inform, educate and protect with your help. I welcome your submissions and feedback.

seiu085editor@gmail.com



Aaron Montoya

CALL YOUR STEWARD FOR HELP

541 346 0321

Please leave your name and phone number so a steward can call you.

Call for help with a work problem, possible contract violation or a disciplinary issue.

LOCAL FOCUS

**OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER SEIU LOCAL 503
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SUB-LOCAL 085**

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