

LOCAL FOCUS

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

SEPTEMBER 2016



SEIU 503 LOOKS TO THE FUTURE AT GENERAL COUNCIL

By *Kurt Willcox*, General Council Delegate

Over three days during early August, nearly 300 SEIU 503 delegates from around the state gathered in Albany to celebrate recent successes and lay out our future direction. Delegates overwhelmingly passed policy resolutions, including support for the following.

- Passing Ballot Measure 97, which will force large corporations to pay their fair share of taxes and provide needed state revenue
- Making more affordable housing available for working people and protecting tenant rights
- Working with community partners in the Fair Shot For All Coalition to secure paid family leave and expand access to affordable health care services
- Continuing our efforts to help low-income workers organize for better wages and union representation
- Addressing the impacts of climate change by working to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, supporting the development of alternative energy sources, ensuring that workers aren't hurt in this transition, and encouraging personal efforts to recycle, reuse, and conserve

GENERAL COUNCIL CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

KEY ■ MEETING ■ SPECIAL

CONTACT ACTION TEAM

Wednesday | September 7

12–1:30 p.m.

Erb Memorial Union

Alsea River Room

LUNCH WITH UO BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Thursday | September 8

12–1 p.m.

Ford Alumni Center

LOCAL 085 MEMBERSHIP

Wednesday | September 14

12–1 p.m.

Erb Memorial Union

Cedar and Spruce rooms

Lunch is provided. All members welcome.

STRIKE HARDSHIP FUND COMMITTEE

Thursday | September 15

12–1 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

STEWARDS COUNCIL

Wednesday | September 21

5–7:30 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

Only stewards, please.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday | September 28

5–7 p.m.

Lewis Integrative Sciences 217

CONTACT ACTION TEAM

Wednesday | October 5

12–1:30 p.m.

Erb Memorial Union

Alsea River Room

GENERAL COUNCIL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MEMBERS VOTE TO EXPLORE EXPANDING MEMBERSHIP TO ADDITIONAL INDUSTRIES

Delegates decided that our union should take the following actions.

- Consider opening membership to workers in industries in which it is difficult for them to secure collective bargaining agreements
- Explore creating a non-profit organization that can secure grant funding and improve our collaboration with community partner organizations
- Simplify accounting procedures and change the way sub-locals like UO get dues, rebates and reimbursements
- Intensify our commitment to equity and inclusion in staff hiring, provide member leadership opportunities, and communicate with members

Governor Kate Brown and House Speaker Tina Kotek both spoke about the importance of electing legislators who will vote for the kinds of programs we support. Nearly a dozen state legislators also attended one night to talk and eat with delegates.

Members who seek to lead our union during the next two years as statewide officers addressed the General Council and informally spoke with delegates throughout the three-day meeting. This fall, union members will vote to select a new executive director to replace Heather Conroy who held the post since 2010. Conroy was recently elected international vice president of the national union. Ballots are scheduled to be mailed during early September. Please inform yourself about the candidates and exercise your right to vote. ■



Delegates that represented 085 were, from left: Kurt Willcox, John Taylor, Zach Benedict, Johnny Earl, Jason Stone, Louie Vidmar, Jimmy Murray, David Pinsonneault. In the front row are: Mariko Yoshioka, Liz Hahn, Theodora Ko Thompson, Buddy (Louie's dog)

UO DELEGATES ON GENERAL COUNCIL

**JASON STONE, WRITING SPECIALIST
KNIGHT LIBRARY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

This was my first General Council, and it was a strong reminder of the great diversity that exists within our union. Attending GC not only underscored the huge variety of jobs that are performed by union members—it also put human faces on all those jobs. For anyone who would question the participatory and democratic nature of our union or the labor movement in general, I would urge them to attend an SEIU 503 General Council in the future.

**LOUIE VIDMAR, WEB ADMINISTRATOR
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS**

I heard a touching story from a care provider who told delegates about one of his clients who died. The part of the private care industry he works in is not well regulated by the state. He said their facility is short-staffed to the point that clients often wait longer than an hour for assistance getting up after a fall or going to the bathroom. Some clients wait an entire week for someone to help them take a shower. Hearing the General Council's support for this care provider and his co-workers' efforts to organize a union was really

touching. It was inspiring to learn about the work and causes that our union supports. It was my first General Council and I spoke in favor of resolutions addressing climate change and democratizing our political endorsement process.

JOHNNY EARL, CUSTODIAL SERVICES COORD., CAMPUS OPERATIONS

I've been to seven General Councils, and this was the best one for me. Being an African-American in Oregon, the kinds of issues that have affected me and my people have rarely ever been spoken about from the podium in front of all the delegates. I am pleased that the Union recognizes our struggle and is willing to confront institutional racism head-on. I'm a proud member of SEIU.

JIMMY MURRAY, TECH. SPECIALIST, STUDENT COORD., KNIGHT LIBRARY

Liz Hahn and I had the privilege of telling the delegates about our recent win against UO Food Services. They responded enthusiastically, and we received a lot of positive individual feedback throughout the remainder of General Council. Everyone we talked to, however, was genuinely outraged that UO Food Services decided to take the food benefit away from student workers.

THEODORA KO THOMPSON EVALUATOR, ADMISSIONS

Equity and inclusion was a major focus at General Council due to the efforts of leaders and

members from all the different caucuses in our union's Civil and Human Rights Committee. We learned about each other, about dignity and pride, about respect, about valuing each other for who we are in our respective identities and about the importance of union members working together on these important issues. My hope is that we have these courageous conversations, not only with our brothers and sisters in our union family, but with our family and with our communities. This was SEIU 503 Executive Director Heather Conroy's last General Council. I have gotten to know her personally through the Civil and Human Rights Committee and as a member of the union's board of directors. Heather was a powerful leader for us through numerous struggles—at the bargaining table and at rallies. Hers was the voice that spoke for us, about us, and told us why unions must remain strong. It was a hard and bittersweet farewell.

JOHN TAYLOR, ELECTRONIC RESOURCES TECH., KNIGHT LIBRARY

Our Union is 55,000 members statewide, and 2.1 million members internationally, representing working people from all areas of life and all points along the ideological spectrum. Our Union isn't a top-down cabal of isolated elites making decisions and passing legislation for the rest of us. Our Union is the rest of us. Any member can propose an amendment, a change in

policy, a new committee, or a goal that they feel our Union should be pursuing. Every voice matters, but to matter, that voice must be heard. General Council is where your voice can be heard across the state and across the country. It is a chance to witness true democracy in action.

ZACH BENEDICT, ADMIN. PROGRAM ASST., AMERICAN ENGLISH INSTITUTE

I am so proud to have represented the U of O as a General Council Delegate and contributing By-Laws Committee Member. The U of O was represented by phenomenal delegates; they showed how strong, talented and devoted we are to our members throughout the week and set an example of unity and solidarity. On the By-Laws Committee, I and five other committee members heard testimony on 13 resolutions, discussed them and voted on them; the wisdom and enthusiasm that our members expressed during that process taught me so much about the strength, passion and diverse membership our union embodies. Having the opportunity to participate, contribute and have my voice heard on issues that shape and guide the direction of our union was an irreplaceable experience that my words aren't able to emphasize enough. I took away enthusiasm to keep pushing for equal and fair rights, not just at the U of O, but for all of us in Oregon and across the nation. ■

BARGAINING OVER ECONOMICS

By *Johnny Earl*
Chief Bargaining Delegate

Union Brothers and Sisters, contract bargaining kicks off again during January. Yes, we did sign a four-year contract last year, but it covered economic issues for only two years. We will reopen the contract next year and bargain economic issues.

What's an economic issue?

- Cost of living increases,
- health insurance,
- retirement, and
- steps

are the big ones, but

- differential pay,
- selective salary increases,
- sick leave,
- personal leave, and
- holidays—not vacation leave—could come into play.

These economic issues are the meat and potatoes of our contract.

- How much will you be able to take home if the cost of insurance goes up?
- What if the universities want to freeze step increases for members who are not topped out on their salary ranges?
- What about the cost of living increases which many of us depend on, because we're already at the top of our salary ranges?
- Perhaps most importantly, what impact will implementation of the long-

delayed classification and compensation restructure have on our step system?

Based on comments we've heard from the universities' chief negotiator, our bargaining team anticipates an attempt to get rid of or seriously reduce our current step system. Steps have been a part of the compensation structure for most of us since we began employment with the universities.

The promise behind the step system has always been that, while you start at a lower wage, you will earn a step increase each year as you gain skills and experience at your job until you reach the top of your salary range. This currently takes nine years for those who start at Step 1, so length of service does pay off in the long run. The other advantage our step system provides is fairness and consistency as we move through our salary range. As long as we do our jobs satisfactorily, we don't have to worry about supervisors choosing to reward some and not others for what they consider superior performance.

I can tell you that our union bargaining team will not agree to any university proposal to eliminate the step system. As far as the classification restructure goes, most of you are probably wondering how the final job classifications turned out. Over the next few months, our union will be holding meetings on

campus to discuss the results of the study. Management did make some adjustments to the job classifications based on the input you offered, but most did not change or changed very little. Unfortunately, they have the management right to make the final decision on job classifications.

We plan to send out an announcement of coming meeting dates; please look for it. One of the things I most want to hear about at these meetings is whether you feel management's proposed salary range for your job classification is fair and appropriate. Normally, we send you a bargaining survey during September, but we won't this time, since we are bargaining solely about a small number of economic issues. We will definitely conduct a survey after bargaining begins, however, once we've seen the kind of proposals management puts forward.

One more thing. I hope everyone will vote for Ballot Measure 97 (A Better Oregon) in November. While the measure doesn't directly provide new funds for higher education, if it passes, it will put the state legislature in a position where it can devote more resources to the universities. That will certainly help our students who are struggling to pay for college, and in a very real sense, a YES vote on Ballot Measure 97 is a vote for a wage increase in our upcoming bargaining cycle. ■

SEIU STEWARD CASE STATISTICS

by *John Taylor*, chief steward

The following data represents trends within the University of Oregon during March 1–July 15, 2016. These statistics are used to track the number and departments of classified employees who contacted SEIU 085 to report concerns that their rights under the Collective Bargaining Agreement are being violated, concerns that they are targets for discipline by management; and/or general questions regarding the CBA and their rights.

In total, 94 employees contacted SEIU during the nearly five-month span. All individual cases are held in the strictest confidentiality. SEIU will never divulge identifying information regarding employees without their explicit consent. These statistics therefore exclude any data that could be used to identify an individual employee or case.

The most frequent concern workers report to SEIU is that they are being targeted by management for discipline. Not surprisingly in a year of austerity cuts and budget reductions, layoffs are not far behind. Workers have also expressed frequent concerns regarding their experiences with the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity; many are in regard to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Issues relating to managerial scheduling practices under the CBA also ranked high. Perhaps most striking is the number of workers reporting inappropriate or hostile workplace climates, issues of harassment in the workplace, and discriminatory behavior. Finally, issues regarding classification and compensation are a frequent source of questions and concern.

It is likely that the actual number of issues is vastly underrepresented in this data, for two reasons. First, on-site shop stewards are more likely to hear about issues within their own department. Many of these issues are resolved internally and never rise to the level of a formal grievance or official report. The disproportionate number of worker concerns

TOP REPORTED ISSUES	NUMBER OF CASES
Employee Discipline.....	22
Layoff.....	15
Affirmative Action and Americans with Disabilities Act.....	15
Harassment.....	9
Scheduling concerns.....	9
Hostile Work Environment.....	7
Compensation and Benefits.....	6
Classification and Out-of-Class Compensation.....	5
Discrimination.....	5

TOP REPORTING DEPARTMENTS	NUMBER OF CASES
University Housing.....	25
College of Arts and Sciences.....	9
Campus Operations.....	8
University Health Center.....	5

.....

emerging from the department of University Housing (about 25 percent of all reports) is difficult to ignore. The second reason that actual issues may be underrepresented is that the union only knows about problems and questions that are reported. Most workers suffer in silence; the CBA can be difficult and daunting to navigate; and many employees have legitimate worries that speaking out about their concerns will make them a target. These statistics demonstrate that, whatever your concerns, fears, or injuries, you are not alone. Others at the UO have also faced injustice. The only way to fight injustice is to bring it to light, call it by name, and refuse to let it pass uncontested. The shop stewards at SEIU 085 are here to assist you in this endeavor. ■

IN FOCUS

Read In Focus, a question-and-answer series to learn about the people who are members of the Service Employees International Union Local 085.

Questions by
Aaron Montoya, editor

[My name is] Dorothy Attneave. If you meet any more of them, they are related to me. I only know of two other ones on the planet at the moment. There used to be some old ladies in England and Australia, but they were 80 years old, like 25 years ago.

Oh, that's fascinating! So, you're only one of a few Attneaves in the world; that's cool.

It's alright, I guess when we die off, that'll be that.

You'll have to name some things.
Yeah, yeah.

Please tell me where you work and how else you're involved with the university.

I work in the capital construction office in Campus Planning, Design and Construction. We're across the mill race over in what used to be called the Physical Plant—Campus Operations—and we're under the same associate VP as the rest of Campus



Dorothy Attneave inspired workers to sing at the UO since 1984. She is a strike hardship fund committee member and a CAT.

Operations. We're responsible for building projects, large and small, everything from giant cranes, to small office remodels. I pay bills over there. I even pay bills for you know, broken windows in the dorms and fixing the sprinklers and stuff like that. The bills vary from multi-millions to under a hundred [dollars].

Wow. So, what's your title?

I'm one of the many Office Specialist 2s. I've been various other things on campus. I started out in the library, actually, in 1984, back when you took the civil service test to get a job here.

Oh, really?

Yeah, yeah, there was a clerical state civil service test, and kinda if you knew which end of the pencil, you were gonna score up in the 90s, but anyway, they used that as the first cut, you know. Everybody at that time was a clerical-something, just like we're an office specialist-something now.

DOROTHY ATTNEAVE

How long [did you work] at the U of O overall?

Well, I'll have my 30 years of service credits this December. Some of it was part time, and I took two years off to look after my uncle in San Francisco, and so, you know, it took from 1984 'til now. (laughs)

Are you from San Francisco, originally?

No, I'm from Texas and Oklahoma and moved to Oregon at the age of 15. I lived in other places since then, but always come back. This is home.

What does the union mean to you?

One on one in the system we've got, we can be ganged up on, but a whole lot of us together are strong. We need each other, and the union is the way we can locate each other, the way that we can take action in concert, all of us together, when we need to, and that's really important. Sometimes it just takes one person to mention something obvious, and that's good, but sometimes you need a steward, sometimes you need a crowd (laughs), you know, so unions are important.

Please tell me about your history with [the union]

I joined within the first five minutes after I started working

in the library. I joined the old union, and I joined the new one, in '84. I was brought up, not in a family that had union members in it, but a family that supported unions and thought highly of unions. I was brought up to know the history whereby people spilled blood in order to make working conditions better in this country, make it so people could get a fair wage.

You joined in '84—how were you involved between then and now?

Well, let's see, in, I think it was '85, we had a strike, so I was involved on the picket lines at that time. I think we're at our best, when we're singing or laughing. Those things put more blood to the brain and make people smarter and tend to work against mob psychology. So, I made it my business to write funny song lyrics and just make copies of the words and run around to picket sites with these word sheets and get people to sing. [It was] very informal and under the radar and outside the system, really, and did that with the idea that maybe we would get a sound

bite. It's really easy to get the word out that there's people marching around the block, but hard to get the word out about why they're marching. At some point around then or a couple years after that, one of our organizers convinced me to ask if other people wanted to make it a labor choir and actually get together, instead of me tryin' to just button-hole people before each rally. We did that, and here we have the labor choir, and we've had fun ever since.

[Also,] I'll go around at 7 o'clock in the morning and try to hit the doors of all the, believe me, many, many different shops within campus ops, with the memo of the day, or the notice of whatever's going on with bargaining, or the meeting flier, or whatever it may be just to try and keep a work unit that's dispersed all over campus informed of what's going on. A lot of 'em don't spend a lot of time staring at a computer like I do, so I try to take that stuff and get copies of it, and spread it around the unit, and talk to people, generally, keep us in the loop over there.

Anything not UO or union related?

I sing with a bunch of other women in Scots Gaelic. We have a good time. It's the Gaelic language, spoken in the Hebrides islands off of Scotland off the west coast, and in parts of Canada and in parts of the northwest, from here on up into [British Columbia]. I can sing in it. Some of the people I sing with can actually carry on a respectable conversation, which is more than I can do, but we were having language lessons and using singing as part of that and we found that we were mostly singing and sittin' in the back of the kitchen, drinking tea or sometimes a little something else and singing songs, so we eventually just decided that's what we were gonna do, and we call ourselves Kitchen Ceilidh (pronounced kay-lee), because we're a ceilidh in the kitchen. (laughs) A ceilidh just means a gathering of friends. It can be anything from a great big dance to a public concert to people sitting in the kitchen and gossiping and singing. It's an Irish word as well as a Scottish word. ■

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.

USE YOUR RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

If your boss or supervisor calls you into a meeting that might reasonably result in discipline against you, you have the right to be accompanied in that meeting by a union steward or representative. Don't participate, and state out loud that you want a steward.

LOCAL FOCUS

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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SUB-LOCAL 085**

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