

LOCAL FOCUS

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

FEBRUARY 2017



STUDENTS PROTEST MEAL TAKE-AWAY FROM WORKERS

Students who represent the Student Labor Action Project protested Jan. 18 what they see as a pay decrease. People who manage UO Dining Service took away a free meal during a shift for student workers. They value free meals as part of their compensation and many non-student food service workers are afforded them. 📷 LAURA DEL COLLINS

STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENT WORKERS Page 2

BARGAINING SURVEY IS DUE FEB. 15

local085.seiu503.org/survey

SEND UO PRESIDENT SCHILL A VALENTINE



Let's send President Schill some love with a valentine and remind him of all we do for the UO. Tell him we need him on our side in contract negotiations, pushing the seven Oregon universities to bargain a fair contract for classified employees.

Visit our website to fill out and print your valentine.

local085.seiu503.org



VISIT THE VALENTINE'S DAY BAKE SALE

The Strike Hardship and Member Needs Committee hosts the annual fundraiser

Feb. 14–10 a.m.–2 p.m.—at the Duck Store at 13th and Kincaid.

We accept donations, too. Money raised is disbursed to people who are members who experience financial hardship due to a strike.

STAY INFORMED, GET UNION INFO FAST

Update or add your email address to for news about bargaining, protest actions and more.



seiu503.seiu.org/page/signup/alerts

Or contact your Local 085 UO organizers to get connected and receive email updates.



Evangelina Sundgrenz
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David Pinsonneault
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STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH STUDENT WORKERS

By *Chuck Theobald*, steward

As you may know, food service workers are among the lowest paid workers on campus. They earn \$25–36k annually for full-time work. A Cook 2 can make up to about \$43,500 after ten years of service; that's based upon an assumption of no step freezes. Student food service workers' individual incomes are certainly less; they are limited to 20 hours per week.

During early 2016, people who are managers with Dining Service met with people who are food service workers to notify them of a change to their compensation. For years, a benefit of food service work has been a free of charge mid-shift meal, a popular practice in the private sector. Managers claimed they wished to help balance their bottom line by charging workers \$1 per meal. During January, they increased the cost to \$3.

People who represent management and people who represent the union indicate that the move adds up to a \$700–800 reduction each year for a person that works full-time. Union members challenged the take-away; compensation is subject to bargaining. The university backed off on their plans to charge classified workers, but moved forward with the take-away for people not



Union members protested alongside students Jan. 18 in Hamilton dining hall. They call the university's take-away of free shift meals from student workers an undeserved cut to their pay and want the compensation returned. © LAURA DEL COLLINS

SIGN THE PETITION

petitions.moveon.org/sign/save-shift-meals-for-1

represented by the union—student workers. They now pay every shift \$3 for a meal they previously ate free of charge. In effect, university administrators just handed those students a 5 percent pay decrease—at minimum.

“It’s a unilateral cut in worker compensation,” Rio Lehman said to the Daily Emerald. Lehman is the, co-director of the Student Labor Action Project, the protest organizers. “They’re essentially nickel and diming some of the lowest paid workers on campus.”

Lehman started a petition to demand free shift meals be restored as part of worker compensation. More than 600 people signed it, so far.

With their action, people who are managers drove a wedge between student workers and classified workers. That is a problem. Students support us, and we want their continued support. It’s time to return the favor. Please, never forget: students are the reason our jobs exist. We need to support student workers and resist these take-aways. ■

TELL LAWMAKERS YOUR STORIES AND PRIORITIES

LOBBY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DAYS
Feb. 14—Higher Ed Feb. 20—Revenue
 State Capitol, 900 Court St., Salem, Ore.

Register to join us at the following location.
fastfor.ms/08BA8

RALLY WITH UNION MEMBERS AT LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WAYS AND MEANS ROAD SHOW

Key Oregon legislators are hitting the road to hear what Oregonians want in the next budget. Join us to tell them what's important.

WAYS AND MEANS RALLY
Sat., Feb. 25—noon
 Lane Community College
 Rooms 308-309 Building
 17-The Forum
 4000 E 30th Ave., Eugene

By *Lois Yoshishige*, chief contact

The state is facing a \$1.8 billion shortfall this year, which will mean drastic cuts in state services for every Oregonian. It will hurt education—K-12 and higher ed—senior services and affordable health care. Without additional funding, tuition will increase by double digits, making higher education affordable only for the wealthy. Education in Oregon was meant for all Oregonians, not just the wealthy.

Out of 50 states, Oregon taxes corporations the least, and it shows. You and I and the people we care about suffer—and even die—due to the lack of services. We can do something.

Let's tell Mr. and Ms. Corporation, "Pay your fair share of taxes like every other Oregon resident!"

Please contact Lois Yoshishige at (541) 346-1251 with questions. ■

UO TOOK MEALS FROM STUDENT WORKERS DURING SUMMER

By *Chuck Theobald*, steward

For years, Dining Service managers gave a free meal to each worker during their shift as part of their overall compensation. The practice is a common one in private sector food service establishments, because it is incentive for their workers. During the summer, while most students were away, dining managers took that away from student workers, moving forward with a plan to get rid of free meals. People who are students and others who are union members largely interpreted the action as an



Jan. 18, students who represent the Student Labor Action Project protested the university's take-away from student food service workers in Hamilton dining hall.

📷 *LAURA DEL COLLINS*

attack that serves only to divide students and classified workers.

Students recognize

the unfair take-away and protested in Hamilton Dining Hall for close to an hour, complete with signs, banners and chants. The protest was well received by students and they understood the message—challenge UO Dining managers to treat students fairly.

This issue is on the table during our bargaining sessions, which are ongoing. Stay tuned in to learn about opportunities to stand with and support the people who are our student co-workers. We need to move forward. ■

OVERCOMING OUR BARGAINING CHALLENGES

By *Johnny Earl*, chief bargaining delegate

Recently, we celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. He was killed during 1968. I was only eight years old at the time, and even at that age I knew why he was in Memphis. The garbage workers there weren't being treated fairly. They were mostly African-American, and they were a unionized work force. I can't tell you if I knew what the word union meant at that age, but I knew people were being mistreated by their employer, and they were Black people, like me.

I knew something was wrong, and I hoped Dr. King would make things right. Unfortunately, the struggle cost him his life. Standing up for justice, equality, and fair wages for everyone can require great sacrifice. I'm sure Martin Luther King, Jr. experienced many scary nights, but his desire to fight for fairness and justice was stronger than any fear he felt.

Union brothers and sisters, we classified workers at the seven Oregon universities face a challenge. It's not what Dr. King faced, but it is significant. We enter contract negotiations while the state and the University of Oregon face sizable financial difficulties.

- What makes a fair and equitable contract?
- What amount should a pay increase be to offset the rising cost of living?
- Would you accept paying for a bigger share of your health insurance premium?
- Should the step structure for annual merit increases remain the same?
- Can we support changes to the IT compensation plan?
- Should food service workers have to pay more to eat the food they prepare and serve?

These questions are in the survey that our SEIU bargaining team launched recently. We'll use your answers to determine our union's priorities in contract negotiations, so tell us what's most important to you. You should have an email with a link to the survey. If you don't, please call the local SEIU 503 Office using 541 342 1055. You can also access the survey directly at the following location.

 local085.seiu503.org/survey

**SURVEY
DUE
FEB. 15**

We'll pass out hard copies of the survey soon for those without easy access to a computer. As we move forward in our fight for fair wages, I think you should know about some of what's going on at other Oregon universities. Oregon State University is scheduled to provide its management staff with a 6 percent wage increase and it has been rumored that Oregon Tech will propose a 4 percent increase for their managers. I'm not sure how much the UO is going to offer its Officers of Administration, but I expect it will be more than the 2.25 percent you and I received in December. I mention this, because the universities bargain together as a coordinated group, and there has already been talk about their not having any money for classified workers.

Many of us worked hard on Ballot Measure 97 to try to boost the state's revenue, but big business fought back with an expensive ad campaign and defeated it. So, right now, it is not clear what level of funding state legislators will make available for higher education.

The way I see it, if the universities need to make any cuts, they ought to start with their management staff. For years, our universities have been top-heavy; there are too many managers and not enough front-line workers. That's why our union has repeatedly tried to get the state to reduce the ratio of managers to workers in higher education just like they did in the Department of Administrative Services.

Our contract bargaining will definitely be a challenge this year. Before it's over, I expect we will be threatened with layoffs and cuts to our wages and benefits. In order to overcome this challenge, we are all going to need to get involved and work together. I hope you are ready to join me in this fight!

Stronger Together! ■

PERS RETIREMENT PROMISE MATTERS TO UNION MEMBERS

By *Keeping Oregon's Promise Staff*

We are the public employees of Oregon. We are people who work with the universities to train the future leaders of our world. We are teachers who pay out of pocket for school supplies when budgets are tight. We are firefighters who put ourselves at risk every day. We are police officers protecting the community and nurses keeping people healthy. We are cafeteria workers, child welfare specialists, park maintenance staff and the many other jobs it takes to keep the state running and care for those that no one else will care for.

Many of us are working for less than we would in the private sector. We agreed to that understanding we would have secure retirement. Now we face more cuts to our secure future. That breaks the promise made to us. ■

WHAT WE EARN

- › Oregon's total compensation—salary and benefits—for state employees is in line with compensation for comparable employees in the Northwest private sector.
- › Oregon teachers earn about 20 percent less than professionals with similar educations.
- › More than 21 percent of classified workers at public universities earn less than \$15 per hour.

WHAT RETIREES RECEIVE TODAY

- › \$27,922—average annual pension benefit
- › 44% of final salary
- › Two-thirds of us receive less than \$3,000 per month. Future retirees will receive less due to legislative changes already made: 53% of public employees are in the reduced OPSRP pension with a supplemental 401K-type account that was created in 2003. As a result of legislative changes in 2003 and 2013, public employees' retirement benefits are lower.

PERS LIABILITY

- › 70%—retirees and inactive members
- › 16%—Tier One members still working
- › 9%—Tier Two members still working
- › 5%—OPSRP members still working
- › Oregon Supreme Court ruled lawmakers cannot take away benefits people earned.

BREAKING A PROMISE AND PASSING THE BUCK

- › Lawmakers proposed to use 6% of our salary to pay benefits to people already retired. The money should go into 401K-type accounts for people hired after 2003.

AND IT GETS WORSE

- › If lawmakers approve the plan, new teachers, firefighters and other public workers get 31% less retirement benefits, making it harder to hire and retain qualified people.
- › Oregon's corporate tax rate is the lowest in the country and prescription drug companies make big profits.
- › Oregon: 5.98% of pre-tax profits
- › National Average: 9.16% of pre-tax profits
- › Compared to U.S. average, we collect 35%, or \$7 billion less every two years.

AND

- › Comcast's unpaid tax bill: \$170 million
- › "Non-profit" hospitals 2015 profits: \$1 billion

**INSTEAD OF PASSING THE BUCK
KEEP OREGON'S PROMISE**

- › SOURCES—Department of Administrative Services, U.S. Census, Oregon Department of Revenue, PERS by the Numbers, Citizens for Tax Justice, Act Now for a Healthy Oregon, Anderson Economic Group, Oregon Health Authority.

NOTES FROM THE STEWARDS COUNCIL

UNION ALWAYS BENEFITS WORKERS, ENCOURAGES SUPERVISORS TO GIVE MORE THAN CONTRACT MINIMUM

By *John Taylor*, chief steward

Published January 19 at local085.seiu503.org

One of the most common reports that stewards receive from workers is some version of the following.

“I just talked to [Human Resources or a manager or an administrator, etc.] and they said that they’d love to give me [more money or a promotion or time off, etc.], but the darn union won’t let them!”

To be clear: the union will never—ever, under any circumstances—tell a worker’s supervisor that they can’t give workers more money, help, support, or the like. That wouldn’t make sense, because we, the workers of UO, are the union. Why would workers tell management not to help workers?

The confusion seems to revolve around what it means to have a Collective Bargaining Agreement. In some cases, management will erroneously fail to notice the fact that the bargaining agreement is actually collective.

Labor bargains the terms of the contract with management. If we union workers were writing the contract by ourselves, the UO would look much different than it does now. We like to think that it would be more functional, equitable, trailblazing and generally desirable as a home for workers, students and faculty. Management has different ideas on many of

these points, and those are reflected in the final contract. The next time a supervisor complains that the union contract is tying their hands, politely remind them that management also wrote that contract and agreed to it.

More importantly, the contract establishes only the minimum responsibility of supervisors with regard to their workers. To put it bluntly, the contract only clarifies the least that management is required to do. If supervisors

want to go above and beyond the minimum contract language and establish the UO as a leader in employer-labor relations, then the union wholeheartedly and unreservedly supports such action.

People who are managers want to pay you more? Great! The union is on board. We will never step in and say “no, the contract states that you can only do the bare minimum for your workers.”

Actually, we have this strange notion that the UO can and should be a

leader in workforce equity, fair negotiations, and worker satisfaction.

The next time that management cites the union or the contract as a reason not to support workers, feel free to leave a message on the Steward Hotline by calling 541 346 0321 and maybe even forward management this article. ■

To be clear: the union will never—ever, under any circumstances—tell a worker's supervisor that they can't give workers more money, help, support, or the like. That wouldn't make sense, because we, the workers of UO, are the union. Why would workers tell people who are managers not to help workers?

THANK YOU RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS

- ★ We recognize the dedicated effort of our brothers and sisters who work with the UO Police Department. Thank you for keeping the UO community safe and helping us connect to one another.
- ★ Thank you to the people who work with UOPD as officers and dispatchers.
- ★ Thank you to the fine folks that work to support them; we appreciate you.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO RECOGNIZE AND THANK?

We are proud of our people, and we are proud of our union. Who do you want to see thanked and recognized in the Local Focus newsletter? Send your suggestions to the following address, and thank you.

seiu085editor@gmail.com

WE CANNOT BALANCE THE BUDGET ON THE BACKS OF WORKING FAMILIES

By *Steve Demarest, SEIU Local 503 OPEU president*

Published December 7, 2016 at seiu503.org

I recently attended the 14th annual Oregon Leadership Summit, at which some people of Oregon’s business community discussed the state budget. The message I heard was loud and clear: Oregon should balance its budget on the backs of working families by reducing the retirement benefits of public employees, by disinvesting in the workforce that educates and provides services to Oregonians, and by accepting cuts to services and communities in need.

I cannot accept that—not when Oregon has the lowest corporate taxes in the nation, a fact that even the business community acknowledged at their event. Several leaders presented a different view. Governor Brown challenged the business people.

“We cannot cut our way to prosperity,” she said, adding that she hoped every person in the room would join her in a conversation about raising new revenue. “If the only solution [to our budget deficit] is to cut teachers’ salaries and

renege on promises to retirees,” Brown said, “this conversation will not go very far.”

House Speaker Kotek and Senator Devlin each correctly noted that promised retirement benefits are not the significant cost driver that people often portray them as.

I believe in our union’s vision for a prosperous, better Oregon—one with a great education system, health care for all, and retirement security for all working people. I believe we can achieve this vision through investments in schools, health care, and programs that help families work and thrive.

We cannot be 50th in the nation in corporate taxes. We must make

large and out-of-state corporations pay their fair share so that our state can move past its problems and build towards the Oregon we want. SEIU members—you and I—need to tell our legislators this. If you haven’t already done so, please commit to standing with us and fighting for a better Oregon. ■

We cannot be 50th in the nation in corporate taxes. We must make large and out-of-state corporations pay their fair share. You and I need to tell our legislators this.

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.

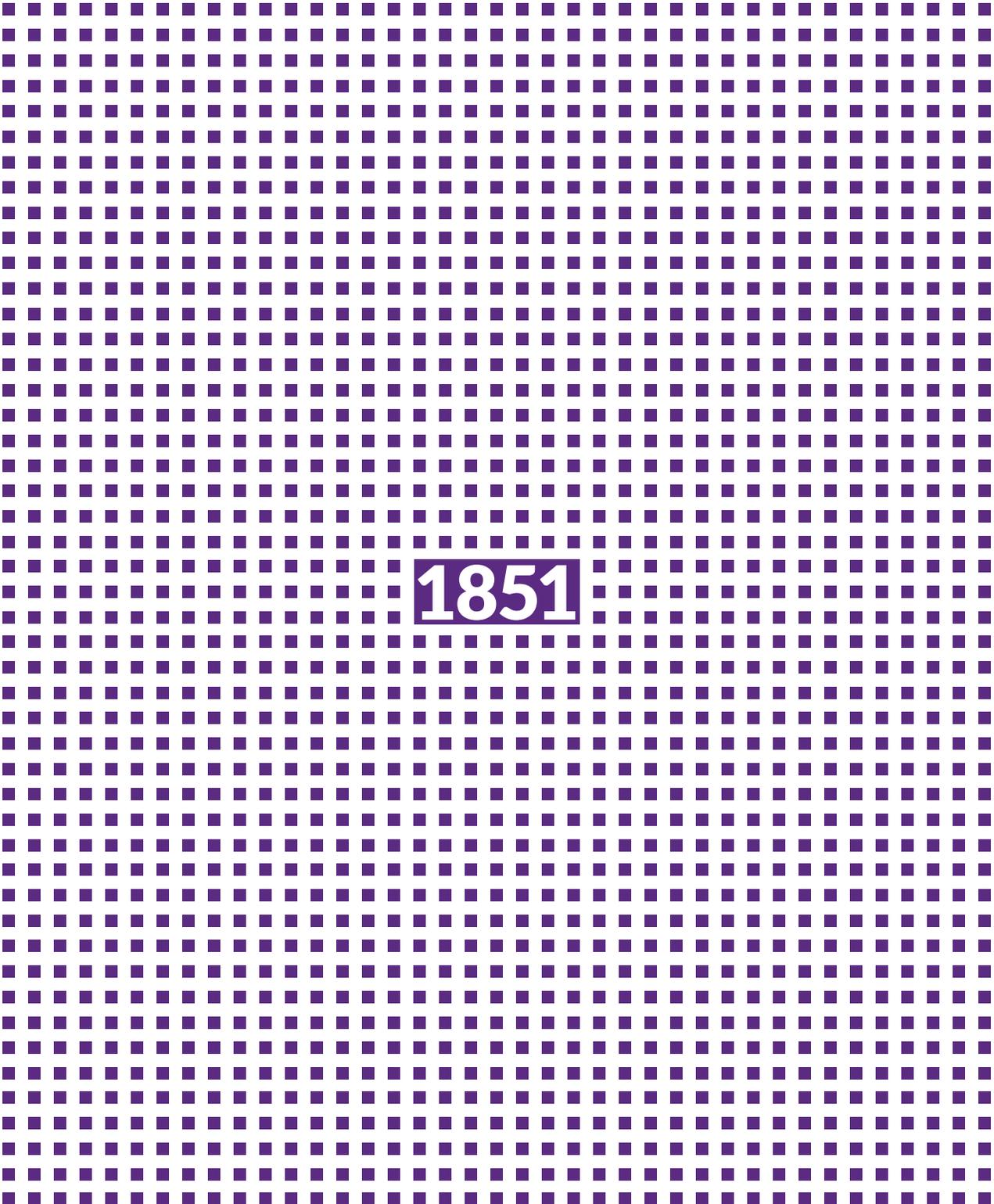
USE YOUR RIGHT TO REPRESENTATION

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.

<i>Admissions</i>	<i>Theodora Ko Thompson</i>
<i>American English Institute</i>	<i>Zach Benedict</i>
<i>Business Affairs Office</i>	<i>Lois Yoshishige</i>
<i>Campus Operations</i>	<i>Johnny Earl</i>
<i>Campus Operations</i>	<i>Gary Malone</i>
<i>Campus Operations</i>	<i>Randy McCutchen</i>
<i>University Senate</i>	<i>Kirk Wilcox</i>
<i>Campus Operations</i>	<i>Candice Woyak</i>
<i>Computer and Information Science</i>	<i>Lauradel Collins</i>
<i>Erb Memorial Union</i>	<i>Michael Barr</i>
<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Lisa Wimberley</i>
<i>Office of Research and Innovation</i>	<i>Chuck Theobald</i>
<i>Police Department</i>	<i>Steven Barrett</i>
<i>Police Department</i>	<i>Adam Lillengreen</i>
<i>School of Journalism and Communication</i>	<i>Louie Vidmar</i>
<i>University Housing</i>	<i>Joe Black</i>
<i>University Housing</i>	<i>Michael Omogrosso</i>
<i>Knight Library</i>	<i>John Taylor</i>
<i>Labor and Education Research Center—UO Portland</i>	<i>Nikki Rudiger</i>

SEIU AT UO—WE ARE **UNITED** AND **STRONG**

We are 1,851 people who are UO classified workers; we represent the bargaining unit. A strong membership base helps us fight for better wages and benefits. Join our union at seiu503signup.org



LOCAL FOCUS

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

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