

Straight from the Prez's Mouth

Last year, we had some success in reducing fees for graduate employees by increasing the fee differential to \$300 dollars per term and maintaining the cap on programmatic fees. However, so-called incidental fees set by the student government remained uncontrollable. Our fee levels could be reduced and, over the next month, we have an opportunity to do that by participating in student government and state government.

The student government will be setting next year's incidental fee through a number of meetings. Initial meetings are budget proposals from groups funded by student government and one of the last meetings, on Wednesday, February 25, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. in MU 109, will be a an opportunity for the public to make comments about incidental fees. As graduate students are underrepresented in student government, this will be the major opportunity for graduate students to impact next year's incidental fees. If you have something to say, this will be the time to say it.

Our other opportunity to reduce our fees is to work with our state legislature to make a fee waiver the law of the land. A proposed bill has the ambitious goal of completely waiving fees for all graduate employees receiving a tuition waiver. On March 9, we will visit Salem and speak with our legislators about this. I don't know that the bill will pass this year. But, just like we were able to win fair-share by repeatedly bringing it to the table over ten years, we can one day achieve a fee waiver to pair with our tuition waiver. We'll finally have what we all thought were going to have when we got our first acceptance letter so many (many, many) years ago. If you want to work on either of these, email me at president@cge6069.org. – John Osborne, President, CGE, COAS GRA

Upcoming Events

Executive Council Weekly Meeting

Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:00 PM

Ed Ray Meeting

12 PM March 17, Kerr Admin

AFT-OR Convention

April 17-19, Sunriver, Oregon

AGEL Conference

June 4th – 7th

University of Oregon

\$34 Grievance Arbitration

Time and date TBD



G M M General Membership Meeting



On January 20th, about 45 CGE members gathered at the Corvallis Senior Center for an evening of good times, good food, and good company. The GMM was the celebratory end to 2 weeks of a very successful Membership Drive. Officers discussed recent and upcoming events of the Union. To find out what these events are, just keep reading!

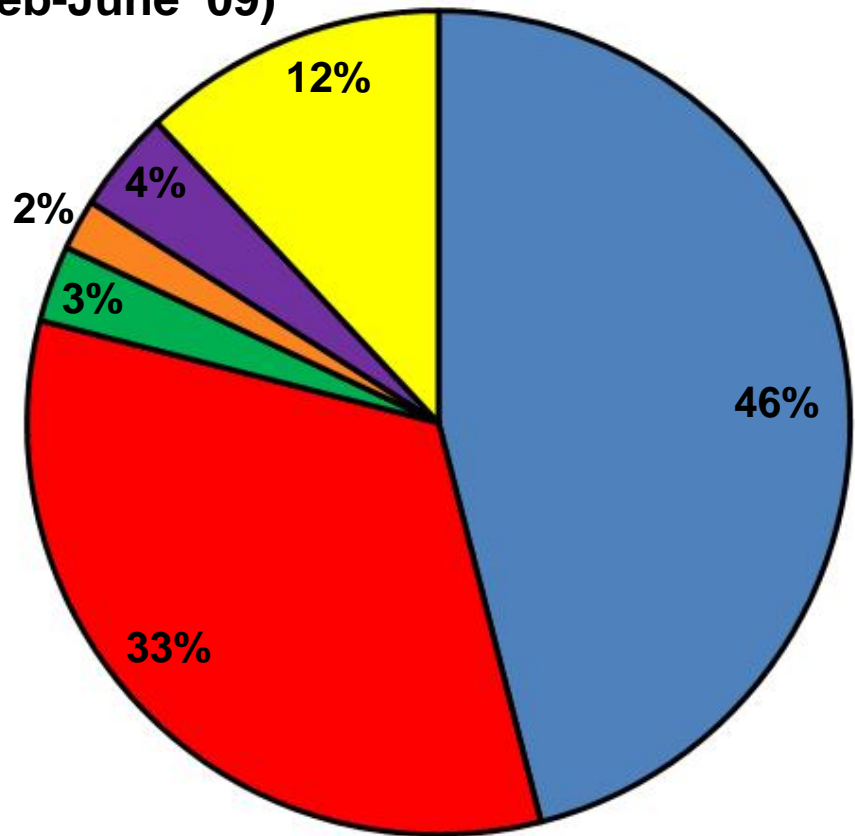


Check out the CGE Facebook page for pictures of the GMM (and if they are not up yet, they will be soon!)



Projected Budget for the Remaining Fiscal Year (Feb-June '09)

With the recent addition of fair-share, the most common questions asked by membership deal with the Union budget. The EC and Staff are committed to making this transition to self-sufficiency as transparent as possible. The pie graph to the right shows a breakdown of CGE expenses. If you have a question or would like to view the budget in greater detail, you are encouraged to call or stop by the office during business hours.



Affiliation (46%)

Our affiliation fees get us access to the member benefits negotiated by both organizations; a staff rep from AFT-OR who provides professional expertise to our local, especially during bargaining; tech support for the office computers (both hardware and software); and paid staff whose job it is to increase funding for higher education at both the state and national level, among other things. AFT-National in particular has access to significant legal and research resources that CGE could call upon if necessary. AFT has also provided substantial organizing and member recruitment support in the past. CGE also pays a small amount to the AFL-CIO to maintain an affiliation with them.

Organizing (3%)

These are costs most directly related to bringing new members into the union. As you can see, they are fairly minimal and most often go to printing and other materials costs. The CGE Executive Council is moving to decrease the amount of paper used for both environmental and financial reasons.

Office (4%)

This covers office rental costs and other basic utilities costs, such as a phone, internet, accounting services, bank fees, email and web hosting, postage, and other miscellaneous office expenses. Many of these are fixed costs.

Member Events (2%)

CGE: holds quarterly meetings for members; quarterly meetings for CGE Reps; barbecues over the summer; sends delegates to the AFT-OR statewide Convention every year; and sends delegates to the biannual Alliance of Graduate Employee Locals conferences, where graduate employee unionists from all over the nation gather to support each other and coordinate efforts.

Contingency (12%)

In the short term, this represents CGE's efforts to save enough money to get through the 2009 summer without spending down our savings. In the long run, it is standard for unions to have a financial reserve equal to six months or more of operating costs. CGE is attempting to start building that reserve fund as well as budget for the summer, *when operating costs significantly exceed member dues*.

Staff (33%)

This pays for the salary and benefits paid to the staff Business Manager and Organizer. Liz and Dennis are indispensable to the most basic functioning and organizing efforts of the Union. The EC, Reps, and other committee members are all non-paid volunteers.

In the News

Association of Graduate Employee Locals Spring 2009 Conference

The Spring 2009 AGEL Conference, focused on leadership development and the future of the graduate employee union movement, will be held June 4-7 in Eugene, Oregon, on the UO campus. That's right – it's being hosted by the GTFF! Given the miniscule travel costs CGE will incur for sending members, the Executive Council encourages any CGE members wanting to get more involved with the union attend the conference.

\$34 Grievance going to Arbitration

On January 28, the Grievance Review Committee, consisting of non-officer CGE members, voted unanimously to send the \$34 grievance to arbitration. CGE filed an official notice of intent to arbitrate shortly after the Feb. 2 deadline for the university to respond passed and is now attempting to schedule a meeting with the administration to select an arbitrator as well as schedule the arbitration hearing itself.

LERC Legislative Conference for Unions

CGE member Alejandra Juarez attended a one-day conference on unions and our interaction with the legislative process in late January. Locals from all over the state were in attendance, as were several state legislators and officials. The message for public employees (including graduate employees) was clear: The state budget situation will be very rough in 2009.

AFT-Oregon 2009 Winter School

CGE sent 4 of its 5 officers to this year's AFT-OR winter leadership training workshops on Jan. 24. AFT-OR hosted 4 different workshops this year, each pegged pretty well toward various officers' duties, so we had all the bases covered! John Osborne attended a leadership skills workshop, Rob Hess practiced preparing video and media presentations, Jim Duncan learned more about member benefits offered through AFT and AFT-OR and how to communicate them to members, and Angela Brandt attended a seminar for treasurers.

AFT-OR / AFT National News

On Feb. 10, AFT members around the country wore blue to work to support the union's effort to pass the national economic recovery plan currently being considered in Congress. The effort is part of the AFT's "Fight for America's Future: It's Dollars and Sense" campaign.

The Feb. 10 event sent a clear message: that strengthening education, healthcare and public services is crucial in order to restore and preserve opportunity in this country. Our schools and colleges, our healthcare and public safety systems, and essential services are facing draconian cuts due to the economic crisis. The AFT strongly supports efforts like the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan and is actively challenging proposed cuts to vital services. Photos are posted on the AFT-OR website.

Employee Free Choice Act

The Employee Free Choice Act, or EFCA, has been getting a lot of press lately. From the AFL-CIO, here are the three main elements of the legislation:

1. Establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations.
2. Provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes.
3. Allow employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation.

The third provision, often called card check, has been in place in Oregon since January 1, 2008, and is getting the most attention. More information, including the text of the actual EFCA legislation, can be found here:

<http://www.aflcio.org/joinaunion/voiceatwork/efca/>

Staff to help GEO-UIC in March

The CGE Staff Organizer will be heading to Chicago for a week in mid-March to help the Graduate Employee Organization at the University of Illinois-Chicago, returning the favor for having their Field Organizer spend two weeks helping CGE during our most recent bargaining.

Member of the Month: Julia Michaels



Julia is a student in the MPP program and works in International Education. Julia holds a B.A. in Political Science and Russian Studies from St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. Her research interests include foreign policy, international development, democratization, transportation policy, and program evaluation.

She has been a very active CGE member. This term alone, she has already participated in the membership drive, phone banking, sat on the grievance review committee and came to the Winter 2009 GMM. And, this is her first year and second term with CGE - she signed up in September at orientation.

Julia loves to travel and has already studied abroad in Turkey and the Czech Republic. After completing her M.P.P. degree, she hopes to enter the foreign service or work in some area of public administration.

Received an Extra \$300 in Your Jan. Paycheck?
Thank a CGE Bargaining Team Member!

Office Hours for Winter Term:
Monday – Thursday, 9am to 5pm.

Contact CGE by phone or email to answer any of your questions!

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