

Straight from the Prez's Mouth

A new calendar year is here, and it presents an opportunity to start things anew, even if we are part way through the school year. Our union has a new initiative with CGE Representatives that we're unveiling. CGE Representatives know or want to know what's going on with people in their department and want to be involved with the union. They can generate new ways for the union to improve the graduate employee experience. They can also provide guidance to the Executive Council and act as a way for the Executive Council to stay in touch with members and their needs.

Being a CGE Representative is also a way to provide leadership for the union, and can be a stepping-stone to bigger leadership roles in the union. Some of these other roles are being an officer and serving on the Executive Council, being an officer in our state federation, and serving on the bargaining team. Bargaining will start again next year, when the contract reopens. This will be an opportunity to further reduce our fees, increase our health insurance coverage, and make OSU a more family-friendly work environment through child care and child health insurance.

Final Results from the Contract Ratification Vote

After a month and a half, we finally have the final tally on the vote to ratify the new contract. Without further adieu:

**51 yes
2 no**

5 uncounted= not members

Upcoming Events

AFT + AAUP Meeting

Tues., January 13th at 5 PM

AFT Winter School

January 23-25, 2009, at the
Hallmark Resort in Newport.

Membership Drive

office visits: Jan. 20-22 and 27-29.
phone calls: Jan. 14th -15th, 6-8 PM

General Membership Meeting

Friday, January 30th, 5:30 PM
Chintimini Senior Center
(located at 2601 NW Tyler Avenue)

\$34 Grievance Meeting

Friday, January 16th

LERC - Legislative Conference for Unions

Saturday, January 24th, Portland

AGEL Conference

June 4-7th
Oregon, exact location TBD

Executive Council Meetings

Wednesdays, 12:00 – 2:00

In the News

CGE Representatives Meeting

On Thursday, January 8th, ~30 CGE members met at Woodstocks Pizza to discuss the new role of CGE Representatives. A CGE Representative is a role within the union that has been developed as a way for members who are interested in building the union to get involved.

At the first meeting, members reviewed a newly compiled packet called the *CGE Handbook*. To assist them in their new roles, members requested additional information they thought would be beneficial to organizing, as well asked for clarification on other Union topics.

If you would like more information, please contact the CGE VP of Organizing Jim Duncan at duncanj@science.oregonstate.edu or Staff Organizer Dennis Dugan at organizer@cge6069.org.

Officers to Attend AFT-Oregon's 2009 Winter School

The conference is scheduled for January 23-25, 2009, at the Hallmark Resort in Newport, OR. Weekend courses include: Basic Web Video Creation and Posting; Changing to Lead, Leading to Change; Treasurers' Seminar; and Membership VPs: A Practical Guide for Connecting with Members. We look forward to hearing from the EC on what they learn.

CGE to create Academic Labor Library

On January 6th, the EC voted to create a library of union-related material and readings on Academic Labor that will be available to members.

Presently, there is a list of relevant readings posted on the website:
http://cge6069.org/resources/readings_on_academic_labor

Please contact Dennis if you have any specific requests!

University of Oregon to host Spring AGEL

From the AGEL Listserv:

Great news!-- AFT has given Eugene the green light, so we'll be holding the spring AGEL in Oregon!! As such, do try to have a representative from your local on the call for February, as we'll start discussing dates, panels, and other AGEL details. Cheers,

Carrie & Kaja (AGEL Co-chairs)

What is AGEL?

AGEL is the Alliance of Graduate Employee Locals (AGEL) and was founded to embody and extend AFT's experience and leadership in graduate employee unionism. AGEL provides an effective structure within the AFT through which graduate employees who are actively participating in existing AFT unions or in active campaigns can offer one another regular support and guidance. In addition, AGEL provides a mechanism for the graduate employee unions to form positions to forward to the AFT higher education program and policy council, on which AGEL holds a seat.

CGE is excited to extend a hand to our Brothers and Sisters at U of O during this rare opportunity!!

LERC Presents Legislative Conference for Unions

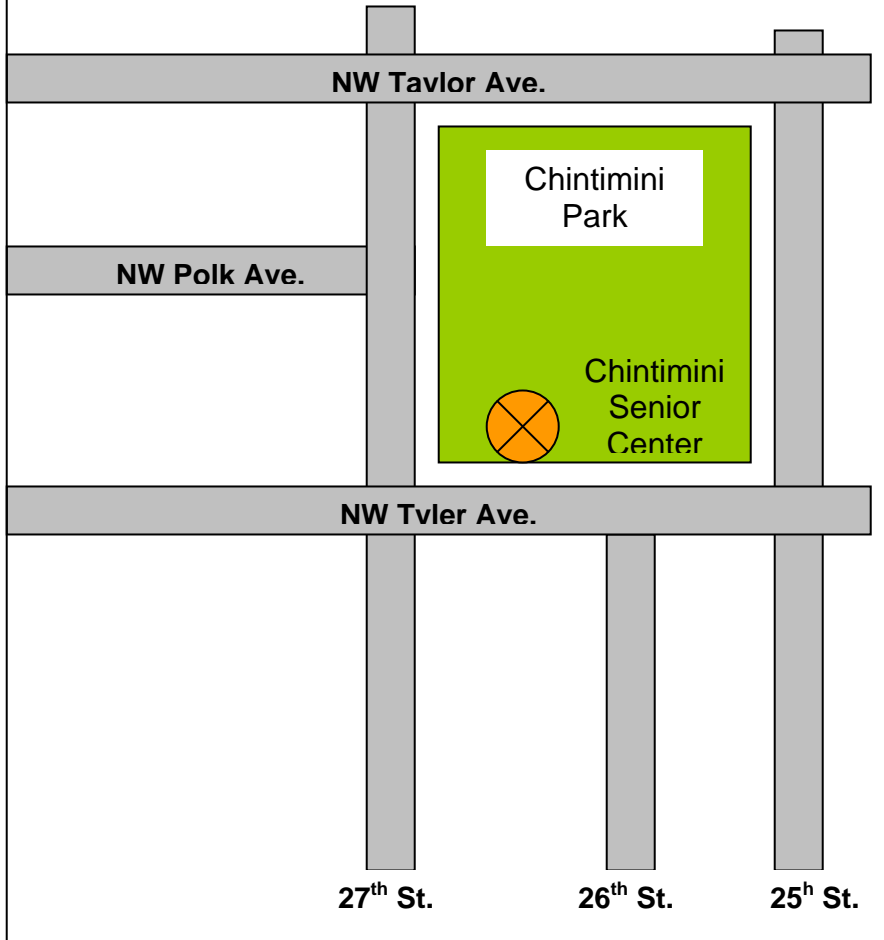
The Labor Education Resource Center, housed in Eugene, is putting on a daylong conference in Portland, Oregon on Saturday, January 24th. Union members that attend will get a chance to meet with state legislators and participate in workshops on a variety of labor issues. Members will also get a chance to hear Oregon's elected officials talk about their agenda for 2009.

Artist(s) still needed to design this year's T-shirts! If you've got talent, we want to hear from you!

General Membership Meeting

The General Membership Meeting this term is Friday, January 30th at 5:30 PM at the Chintimini Senior Center on the corner of 26th and Tyler. Items on the agenda for the meeting include the possibility of getting fees covered through legislation, nominating and electing delegates to send to the annual AFT-Oregon Convention, forming a budget committee to plan next year's budget, and more!

There'll also be plenty of food and drink for all who attend. So, come down, find out what the union has been up to, meet other grads, and get a good start to your weekend with some free food and drink!
Hope to see you there.



GTFE GMM

Our Brothers and Sisters of Eugene will also be holding their Winter GMM this month, on January 16th at 5 pm. If anyone is interested in carpooling down, please contact Dennis in the CGE office. The meeting will be held at 155 High St, Eugene

Be there or, alternately, be square. Doors and kegs open at 5 pm.



Person of the Month

Brett Nair

CGE is saddened to learn that our AFT-OR Field Representative, Brett Nair, has taken a job with the National Educators Association and will no longer be with us.

Brett has been with CGE since 1999. Since then, he has driven down from Portland at least once, sometimes up to three times, per week to attend Executive Council meetings, GMMs, bargaining sessions, membership drives, and organizing events. As the Field Rep for several Unions, Brett spent a disproportionate amount of time helping to organize CGE and win Fairshare. Brett will be sorely missed. CGE wishes him the best of luck and happiness as he begins his new job.

Update on the \$34 Summer Tuition Base Grievance

As you may know, CGE is currently in the midst of a class-action grievance proceeding related to what we believe is a breach of contract by the university. For those unfamiliar with this grievance, this summer and every summer past, all of our members, regardless of whether or not they were on assistantship, were levied a \$34 charge on their student account entitled the "Summer Session Tuition Base." The name alone would imply that this charge is, in fact, part of tuition, and hence, under Article 12 of the CGE-OSU collective bargaining agreement, should be remitted to all grad employees on assistantship over the summer term.

In an initial conversation with OSU Human Resources regarding this charge, HR told CGE that the Summer Session Tuition Base is not, in fact, tuition, nor is it a student fee. Such a charge represents a grave danger to grad assistants because it sets the precedent that the university can circumvent legal approval procedures to levy new tolls on us. In particular, any increases to tuition must be approved by the Oregon state legislature, and any increases in fees must be approved by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education. Moreover, both of these classes of charges must be outlined in the Oregon University System Academic Year Fee Book.

CGE filed a step 2 class action grievance regarding this charge on August 26, 2008. In response, OSU Director of Human Resources Jacque Rudolph informed CGE that the Summer Session Tuition Base is, as far as HR is concerned, a student fee. In addition, she denied our grievance as untimely but offered no justification for her doing so.

Upon deeper investigation, CGE found no evidence that the Summer Session Tuition Base had been approved by the State Board of Higher Ed, nor could we find it listed in the Academic Year Fee Book. However, we did find that the Academic Year Fee Book lists graduate summer tuition at \$210 per credit with a \$34 base charge—a Summer Session Tuition Base charge, if you will—indicating that this toll is, in fact, tuition and must thus be remitted to all grad students on assistantship over the summer term. Examination of grads' summer session student bills confirms this breakdown.

Consequently, CGE, in accordance with the current CGE-OSU collective bargaining agreement, resubmitted the grievance to the OUS Labor Relations Division as a step 3 grievance. On November 20, 2008, we presented our case to OUS Director of Labor and Employee Relations Rick Hampton and asked that all grads be remitted the Summer Session Tuition Base charge for every summer term in which they held an assistantship. We expect his response soon. Should the grievance once again be denied, we believe the strength of our case will warrant bringing this grievance to arbitration.

A CGE victory in this grievance proceeding would be significant, since not only would it recover money wrongly misappropriated from grad employees, but it would also serve to indicate a slight but meaningful shift of power away from the university administration and into the hands of OSU's grads, brought about through increases in CGE's membership and manifested in an increased ability for CGE to fight for just treatment of OSU's grad employees.

We'll keep you posted on how things play out.

Office Hours for the Winter Semester:
Monday – Thursday, 10 am to 5 pm.

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

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