



CGE INDEPENDENT

A Publication of the Coalition of Graduate Employees AFT Local #6069

March-April 2008

Introduction

That was one heck of a term, wasn't it? It was for the Coalition of Graduate Employees. Lots of things going on these days – and spring term promises to be even busier. To wit: There have been staff and officer changes, bargaining sessions with the university, a General Membership Meeting and even a baby! Next term there will be more bargaining, an officer election, another General Membership Meeting, some volunteers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and more. Much, much more....

Hear Something? Let Us Know!

If you or someone you know has questions or concerns about their assistantship or how their department is treating graduate employees, make sure and let us know what's up: unite@cge6069.org or 757-7141.

Officer Elections

If you have a vision for what CGE could be (and can summon some energy to promote that vision), if you've got a thing for being elected, if you've got an interest in the larger world of unions and union work - heck, if you've got an interest in working on behalf of all graduate employees here at OSU, then by golly, you should become an officer in CGE!

We've got five positions coming open at the end of this year: President, Secretary-Treasurer, VP of Communications, VP of Collective Bargaining and VP of Organizing. All it takes to run is a declaration at the spring General Membership Meeting on April 24th at 5 PM in Kelley 1007, where we'll be nominating and electing officers for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Questions and comments about being an officer can be directed to president@cge6069.org. (And if you intend to run, please let the current crop of officers know beforehand.)

Upcoming Events

March 31	Spring Term Begins
April 7th	CGE-OSU Bargaining Session @ MU 206, 1 PM
April 15th-17th	Membership Drive
April 18th-20th	AFT-Oregon Convention @ Sunriver
April 22nd-24th	Membership Drive
April 24th	General Membership Meeting @ Kelley 1007

General Membership Meeting

Once a term the Coalition of Graduate Employees plans and holds a General Membership Meeting regarding all things CGE (which, of course, generally include a little food and drink). This term's GMM will be held in the Kelley Engineering Center on campus and starts at 5 PM on Thursday, April 24th. After the more formal part of the meeting, we'll transition over to Bombs Away or American Dream for some tasty beverages and snacks. We would love to see everyone before the term really heats up!

CGE Bargaining Team Frustrated After Third Round of Negotiations

The CGE Bargaining Team held its third round of negotiations with the OSU Administration's team on March 17. This session marked the closing of the table to new proposals and the beginning of bargaining in earnest over the proposals put forth by the teams during the initial sessions.

Unfortunately, despite outlining proposals on childcare assistance and guaranteed emergency leave for graduate employees, the CGE team left the third session feeling frustrated in many ways. Most notably, the team was surprised by the Administration's regressive initial proposals, characterized by their call for across-the-board cuts to take-home pay in the form of the abolition of the \$250-per-term fee differential, their desire to abolish the legally binding minimum salary and their belief that no action needs to be taken regarding the lack of adequate summer health insurance or lack of affordable family coverage.

As they offered no replacement to the differential, the Administration tried to quell concern by stating that their insulting proposal was crafted to allow them to hear what the CGE team was asking for and to respond appropriately. However, this position only reinforces our belief that the Administration has no vision regarding the way the Graduate Employees should be compensated for our hard work. Instead, they rely on the vision of CGE and its membership to initiate progress towards fair and equitable compensation and working conditions for graduate employees.

To make matters worse, the Administration began to show disquieting signs of a proclivity to impede progress in negotiations. Before the March 17th meeting even began, the Administration withdrew into a caucus that lasted for nearly half an hour. In other words, **the Administration was not even willing to show us the respect of preparing themselves ahead of time and was instead content to waste a quarter of the time allotted to bargaining.**

Moreover, the Administration adamantly refused to set out onto the long road ahead of us by engaging in the accord-building practice of forming tentative agreements on some of the more uncontroversial non-economic issues.

Such uncooperative behavior by the Administration has stoked fears that these negotiations will be prolonged and severely contentious. Let us hope these fears are abated in the meetings to come.

MEMBER-DRIVEN BARGAINING

Winning a good CGE contract involves a lot more than just sitting at the table. Here are some ways CGE members can effect the outcome:

Attend bargaining as an observer

Attend bargaining... with a friend. Or three.

Attend a CGE event.

Volunteer to help plan a CGE event.

Talk to graduate assistants about joining.

Write a letter to the Barometer or Gazette-Times.

Spread the word among GAs in your department about what's going on.

Plan a meeting for all the GAs in your department.

GTFB Bargaining Update

Our friends in the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation Local #3544 (gtff.net) down at the University of Oregon in Eugene happen to be bargaining this spring as well. They're facing some stiff resistance from the university on similar issues: fee relief, minimum salary increases and health insurance coverage. Interested folks should check out their bargaining blog: <http://gtffbargaining.blogspot.com/>

Officer and Staff Changes



This term we welcomed and said goodbye to Melissa Hastings (MIME) as CGE Vice President of Organizing. Melissa stepped up after helping audit the CGE books last fall and made the rest of us look bad with her apparently endless and effortless fountain of ideas. Here's hoping Germany appreciates your hard work and creativity as much as we did.



Spring term brings us Jim Duncan (Geosciences). Jim has accepted the position of Vice President of Organizing, replacing the aforementioned Melissa. Jim's interest in geography (specifically, how people interact with their environment), backpacking and the outdoors in general is only matched - we hear - by his amazing work ethic.



On a less-than-ecstatic note, CGE said goodbye to longtime staff organizer Chad Burger. Chad worked with CGE for well over two years. He's since moved on to a position with the Veteran's Administration in Roseburg, but we know he'll be back - the combination of such a bike-friendly city in Corvallis, the amazing Thai food of the Woodsmen in Philomath and a great independent theater in the Darkside make it hard to stay away. We wish him the best.



Replacing Chad is new staff organizer Dennis Dugan. Dennis was brought to help out with contract negotiations and took over the staff organizer position when it came open. Having graduated from OSU just a few years ago, his familiarity with campus should prove an asset in continuing to build the Coalition of Graduate Employees.

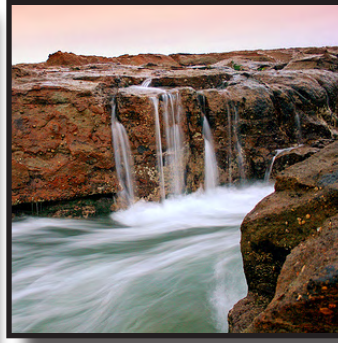
UIUC Volunteers

In April, CGE will be fortunate to host three volunteers from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. All three are previous union members who now serve as staff and will be here for two weeks working with CGE on contract negotiations and building membership.

<http://cge6069.org>

Use the new **website** and **bargaining blog** to keep up to date with what's going with bargaining as well as check out the current CGE Contract.

Member of the Month: GEOSCIENCES



Yes, this time around it's the whole department. Geosciences currently is home to two of the five CGE officers, a bargaining team member, and a whole host of folks who have been observing bargaining sessions. For that, and because they're just awesome, Geosciences is our member of the month!

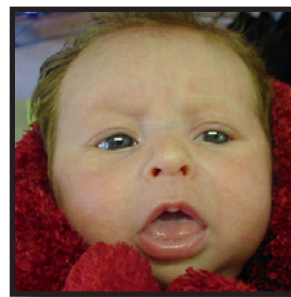
Membership Drive

With the arrival of spring term (and spring!), it's time for another CGE Membership Drive. We'll be out and about during the weeks of April 14th-18th and April 21st-25th looking for graduate assistants who are willing to join CGE. **This is a volunteer-driven event, so please consider taking a few hours during that time to come out and canvass campus.** Interested folks can email Dennis at fairshare@cge6069.org for more information.

AFT-Oregon Convention

On April 18th CGE will be sending a delegation of five to the AFT-Oregon annual convention in Sunriver. The AFT-Oregon Convention allows locals statewide to affect the course of AFT-Oregon for the coming year. There are several interesting resolutions on the table, so keep an eye for a future newsletter with the conventions results.

Baby Alert!



CGE Vice President of Communications Allison Weinsteiger had her first child in late February, and we'd like to offer Allison, Keith and Madeleine Mae our congratulations!



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