



THE AGITATOR

Newsletter of the University of Oregon
GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS FEDERATION
870 E 13th., Eugene, OR 97401 (541) 344-0832 <http://gtff.net> gtffnewsletter@googlegroups.com

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 LESS-T's Night of the Living Debt
- 2 Bargaining Philosophy 201
- 3 Global Expo Seeks Ambassadors
Health Insurance Update
Banner-Holding for Womenspace
- 4 Speech: LESS-T & Debt Bondage
- 5 Why "Right to Work" is Wrong
- 6 Know your CBA: On Grievances
Contract Campaign Committee
- 7 Working on an Armed Campus
- 8 About the GTFF

Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, Nov. 5

Contract Campaign Committee Meeting
GTFF Board Room, 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 6

Executive Council Meeting
Allen Hall 101, 5-7 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 7

ASUO Tuition & Fees Task Force Meeting
Friendly Hall 106, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 9

4th Annual Civil War Brew-Off
Corvallis Odd Fellows Hall, 7-11 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 23

LESS-T Party
Contact Dana Rognlie or Judith Lechner
at less tuition@gmail.com for details;
7 p.m.



LESS-T Presents: Night of the Living Debt

In order to bring the campus community's attention to the issue of increasing tuition and student debt, the League of Educators and Students Slashing Tuition (LESS-T) hosted a student benefit concert and speak-out in collaboration with the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), the Survival Center, and the GTFF at the EMU Amphitheatre on Wednesday, October 30th.

Amidst the music were invited speakers from LESS-T and affiliated groups. Joanna Stewart (SLAP and LESS-T) emphasized SLAP's commitment to fighting student debt, while Joe Henry (GTFF, VP External Relations) noted that students in this commodified world are increasingly unable to approach education with a fresh and open mind, festively comparing their plight to the slavish existence of zombies.

Kurt Wilcox (SEIU) thanked students

for their support during the SEIU strike preparation, and emphasized the importance of campus solidarity in the face of a UO administration that has historically tried to pit campus groups and organizations against one another.

Dana Rognlie (LESS-T; GTFF; VP at Large, AFT-OR; ASUO Tuition and Fees Task Force Co-Chair; UO Tuition and Fees Advisory Board Student Rep.) used the opportunity to inform students about the mechanisms through which students and educators are becoming meaningfully involved in the tuition-setting process, including the new ASUO Tuition and Fees Task Force that LESS-T in collaboration with the ASUO Executive Office is about to launch.

The Task Force will allow students to participate in a committee committed to researching and proposing tuition and fees-cutting ... *cont'd pg. 7*



Letter from the President: Bargaining Philosophy 201

We will have our first proper bargaining session with the University of Oregon sometime in mid- to late-November. Since October 11th's GMM, those involved with the bargaining and contract campaign committees have been hard at work shaping the arguments, writing the language, and generally laying the groundwork for this first very important session.

Appreciating just how the GTFF has been preparing and positioning as we stand on threshold of the 2013-2013 bargaining cycle may be helped by briefly comparing what might be called the respective "human structures" of the GTFF and the University of Oregon as both prepare to bargain. Doing so reveals a simple fact that is, to my mind, worth emphasizing: the GTFF, organized as a diffuse network, can be *numerically differentiated* from the university, organized as a column. What follows is an attempt at *describing*, rather than *judging*, this structural differentiation.

The "human structure" of the University of Oregon, viewed with regards to bargaining, can be described as a lean column of carefully selected, highly paid lawyers, administrators, and (at the level of the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, especially) business leaders, none of whom were elected into their positions, and all of whom were either appointed or hired with the interest of the University of Oregon and the Oregon University System in mind.

Theirs is not, at least not in any direct way, the interest of those who work *for* and *at* the university (say, GTFs), and is not even their own interest (their lives will for the most

part be unaffected by what results from bargaining), but is rather the interest of *the university itself*, taken as a nationally ranked, athletically branded, and financially savvy institution of higher education. Bargaining decisions made within this column are securely conducted according to clearly delineated hierarchies of decision-making authority by a handful of people, many of whom are connected to the university and its educational mission only by having been specially contracted (at industry-competitive rates) to assist the university during it bargaining with the GTFF.

The "human structure" of the GTFF, by contrast, can be described as a (loose) network of highly motivated (though distracted by our degree-progress), entirely unpaid (except for our two staff) graduate students and teachers from a hodgepodge of disciplinary, geographic, and experiential backgrounds. Our interest is more personal: what results from bargaining will have a direct and measurable result on our lives and the lives of our friends, colleagues, and nameless graduate co-workers across campus.

The educational mission of the university is certainly within our sphere of interest, but, considered at the level of bargaining, our well-being as graduate workers is almost certainly more central to our interest than the well-being of the university as an institution. Bargaining decisions made within this network are proposed and generated, short term, within volunteer-sourced committees that *any* GTF is welcome to audit, contribute to, or join, and, long term, at the levels of the executive council of freely elected departmental stewards

and of the general membership, who meets at general membership meetings each term. And though, as president, I have some authority in facilitating these decisions granted to me by our by-laws, the decision-making power that I hold on our side of the process is dwarfed by that held by President Gottfredson (appointed by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education in 2012) on the university's side.

It is clear, as a matter of fact, that the GTFF and the University of Oregon have drastically different "human structures." Much more could of course be said of them by way of description and analysis—to say nothing of passing judgment upon their relative merits. Without going into further detail (all of which will be revealed in the coming weeks and months), suffice it to say that the GTFF considers its *numeric difference* from the university—at the level of organizing, selection, and decision-making—one of its *greatest strengths*. The challenge and the trick has been, and shall no doubt continue to be, using our numbers to our advantage, exercising this strength in just the right way at just the right time.

Here I am optimistic. Even so, additional GTF volunteers to help with bargaining are always needed. So, please consider volunteering (simply e-mail me at president@gtff.net to find out how): our network-like "human structure" has a space opened up within it with your name on it.

Best wishes,

David Craig
President
Philosophy



Wanted: 100 Student Ambassadors

The Office of International Affairs and its Global Studies Institute is coordinating with TrackTown USA to host a UO Global Expo during the IAAF World Junior Championships to be held at Hayward Field in July 2014.

This is the *first time* this important international athletic event will be hosted in the United States, and also the *first time* it will be held on a university campus.

GSI is recruiting over 100 UO Student Ambassadors for this event. UO Ambassadors are an elite group of University of Oregon students who volunteer their foreign language and cultural competency skills for the rare opportunity to assist young athletes (age 19 and under) from around the world during the World Junior Championships. The athletes speak about 93 different languages!

UO Ambassadors will help ensure

that teams are oriented to their accommodations and know where to go for competition needs. International teams will come to Eugene with staff and translators, so UO Ambassadors are not the sole interpreter for teams, but rather provide a personal “Duck” touch of hospitality and diplomacy, providing teams with the best possible experience of UO, Eugene, and the U.S.

Applications and additional information can be found at: globalexpo.uoregon.edu/apply/

Deadline for applications is November 18, 2013.

Questions may be directed to globaloregon@uoregon.edu

Stay tuned for more amazing opportunities to show off UO's diverse campus and our global excellence to 2500 college-bound international athletes and 300+ international media journalists.

GTFs Raise Awareness for Womenspace

On the afternoon of Friday, Oct. 25, a group of GTFs took to the streets of Eugene to hold banners advertising the mission and contact information of Womenspace, Eugene's domestic violence awareness and advocacy group.

As in years past, Womenspace reported an upsurge in calls and inquiries after the event. If you or someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, or if you would like to donate or otherwise volunteer to help Womenspace, e-mail info@womenspaceinc.com.

Following the banner-holding,

volunteer Malori A. Musselman (GTF, Political Science) expressed the personal importance of the event:

The Womenspace event is a great reminder of what two hours of activity can do to change the life of an individual. The fact that even one person calls Womenspace after holding the banner warms my heart. I will participate every year that I am here in order to benefit these people and the city of Eugene. Thanks again to Shawna and Kyle who held the banner with me (or over me) in order to help victims of domestic violence in the city of Eugene.

Insurance News: Alternative Care Back To 20 Visits!

In case you have not heard, our alternative care visits (i.e., chiropractor, naturopath, acupuncture, massage therapy) have gone back to 20 visits per plan year. You may be wondering, “Gee, I have already met my \$100 deductible for the year, and would get a massage, but don't know how to find a preferred provider who will bill my awesome Pacific Source coverage for 90% of the cost of the session.” Wonder no longer thee of knotted muscles!

How to find a preferred provider. Go to pacificsource.com > “Find a Doctor or Drug” > “Find a Doctor” > “Provider Directory” > Fill in the city and state > select type of specialist under “Specialty Category” (hint: LMT is “Alternative Care Provider”) > then under “Plan Accepted” choose “PSN,” yes, that's plain ol' PSN, none of them fancy PSN's on there.

Questions about coverage? Contact Glenn: 541-344-0832; hit “1” at the menu.



Surviving a Zombie Apocalypse: LESS-T Fights Debt Bondage

Ed. Note: The following is the text of a speech given by Joe Henry at LESS-T's Night of the Living Debt benefit concert on Oct. 30

I'm a 3rd year grad student in anthropology and an officer with the GTFF. I want to begin by thanking LESS-T for inviting us on out to say a few words. As someone who supports low tuition, and also has a special place in my heart for zombies, I am very excited to be here speaking at the "Night of the Living Debt."

You know there are a lot of different stories and myths about zombies but the one I love the most is the role of zombies in the buildup to the revolution in Haiti. During French colonial rule secret societies of runaway slaves would use the curse of becoming a zombie as a threat to make sure nobody would betray the group's values and ideas as well as tell on them to the colonial authorities.

This was very serious threat, because to become a zombie meant that one's body became rigid and stiff and reduced to only being able to completing basic physical tasks; one's mind became numb and trance-like, incapable of creativity and suited only for menial, repetitive work, befitting that of a slave laborer. In fact, once you became a zombie you would return back to the plantation, unable to resist the power of the slave master.

So, what does this have to do with you?

Nationwide, student debt now is over \$1 trillion and university tuition has increased **500%** since the 1980s, making you the most indebted generation in history. You will experience this individually just as much as you do collectively. Loans are

the only way to pay for college as there is no extra money available. Many students will owe so much money that they will be paying interest on something they can never pay off, and will take that debt to the grave.



This is called debt-bondage. It begins here with the raising of tuition and exacts a heavy toll when you're in school. As GTFFs we see it on a daily basis in our classrooms when students that must hold down a job struggle to keep up with their coursework; students are so tired they fall asleep in class and/or miss important assignments. Student debt may also affect you beyond the university by constricting your job choices, in many cases choosing to take a lower paying job that you didn't go to school for; it will also paralyze your credit so that you will be unable to make investments like buying a home and starting a family.

Life will become a seemingly endless routine of making payments on the compounded interest of your loans.

Every month, burdened with the stress of making those payments amidst other bills and needs. And every minute you spend thinking and working toward paying off that debt is a minute not spent using your creative potential toward something you want to do.

What is to be done? What can any of us do to survive in this zombie apocalypse?

Support LESS-T. If you haven't already, talk to someone to see how you can get involved. They're like Darryl's crossbow in the hit series *Walking Dead*. As grad students we are very much committed to supporting LESS-T in the struggle to slash tuition. For one, as students many of us have and continue to accumulate high levels of debt. Second, as workers our wages are below the poverty line and are not fully compensated for the amount of time and work we put into our jobs as GTFFs. When the university raises tuition we do not get paid more. We too are reliant on credit cards and many of us take out student loans to keep up with the cost of living.

The other summer I even had to sell my blood to pay for groceries. I could tell from the high lighters and the printed up copies of journal articles that there were undergrads there with me.

I would like to close with a quote from *Shaun of the Dead*, when the main character Shaun quotes Bertrand Russell, saying "The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation." I think we can all appreciate the relevance of that now. On behalf of my sisters and brothers in the GTFF you have our support.

Joe Henry
VP External Relations
Anthropology



Why “Right to Work” is Wrong, and What You Can Do to Help

One of the biggest issues on the GTFF’s political radar this year is Right to Work legislation. Despite their deceptive names, so-called “Right to Work” measures do anything *but* protect the rights of workers: they make it excessively difficult for unions to operate while threatening our capacity to collectively bargain.

Right to Work legislation has already had an adverse effect on several graduate student unions, most recently those in Michigan and Indiana. The fight against anti-union legislation will be moving into our own backyard this coming year, as it’s looking more and more like multiple Right to Work measures will be on Oregon’s 2014 ballot.

As AFT-Oregon’s website explains, Right to Work legislation forces “unions to bear the cost of representing workers who choose not to join the union, without the payment of fair share dues” (<http://or.aft.org/ip-9-latest-threat-employee-rights-gets-new-title>).

Currently, the GTFF collects full-share dues from GTFs that elect to join the union as full members and reduced fair-share dues from GTFs that do not. In this scenario, *all* GTFs contribute to the costs of the union that bargains on their behalf for improved wages and benefits.

Under Right to Work, however, only a *fraction* of GTFs would be bearing the costs of this labor that affects them. One of the measures being considered for the Oregon ballot will prohibit automatic union dues

deduction from public employee paychecks, making it nearly impossible for unions to collect the dues that keep them up and running.

The main proponents of these ballot measures are big corporations, including the Koch Brothers (oil and chemical company billionaires), who seek to gain from the reduced wages, benefits, and hours that come along with weak unions.

It’s important that we take action now against this destructive legislation by educating our community about Right to Work and by supporting political action within our union. Here are three things you can do now to take a stand:

1) Talk to your friends, colleagues, and family members about what Right to Work really means.

Make sure that everyone understands that Right to Work actually *robs* workers of their rights. Explain how these measures will affect your life—without a strong union, our ability to bargain for fair wages, good healthcare, and safe workplaces will diminish. The organization *Keep Oregon Working* has some great tips to help you start the conversation: <http://www.keeporegonworking.org/action-center/>.

2) Join the GTFF Committee on Political Education (COPE).

The COPE will be working to keep our membership updated about Right to Work and will be

coordinating actions against these measures later this year and into 2014. If you can lend your head and hands to the cause, please e-mail Anna at political.education@gtff.net.

3) Support AFT-Oregon’s fight against Right to Work by donating to the Political Action Fund.

The work that AFT-Oregon does in Salem and beyond is crucial to protecting our rights as students and workers. With our help, AFT-OR will better be able to fund actions against Right to Work legislation in our state.

By signing up for the Political Action Fund, a small amount of your paycheck each month will be allocated to AFT-Oregon, contributing resources towards political work that matters.

Every little bit will count in the hard battle that is before us this year, and you can donate as little or as much as you are able. To sign up, visit the GTFF Office and ask to fill out a PAF card, or contact Anna at political.education@gtff.net.

Here’s to hoping that we defeat these Right to Work measures that aim to destroy our union, and that the GTFF can continue to *fairly* fight for better wages, benefits, and working conditions for all graduate student employees at the University of Oregon.

Anna Sloan
VP Political Education
Anthropology

*Want to contribute to your union newsletter? Submissions of all sorts are welcome!
Contact member.communications@gtff.net for more information!*



Know Your CBA: Article 13, Grievances

Greetings from your VP of Grievances! Just as a first reminder, the collective bargaining agreement can be found at gtff3544.net/cba/. This month I am talking about a section very near and dear to my heart and position: Grievances! This article goes through the process and timeline for grievances. Text taken from the CBA will be in quotes.

As a quick overview beforehand, there are three stages of grievances. Step 1 is an informal oral grievance to the supervisor. Step 2 is a formal written grievance submitted to the department, followed by a grievance meeting with the graduate school. Step 3 is similar to step 2, but now must go to the president of the university instead of the graduate school. If it is still not resolved at that point, it can be taken to binding arbitration.

So let me give some of the quick points of each section:

Section 1: Intent. This states that this article outlines the process for grievances to be used. And that everything should be done fairly and quickly.

Section 2: Definitions. This article gives the definitions of grievance, grievant, and working day to be used in this article.

Section 3: General Provisions. This has five parts pertaining to the way this process should go. The grievant can consult with the union and have union representation as long as it doesn't interfere with your GTFF duties.

Timelines are not set in stone and can be reasonably extended. If a decision is not given to the grievant, they can move to the next step; if the grievant does not respond, that is taken as accepting the decision.

The grievant can self-represent or have union representation, but all outcomes must follow the CBA (it is important to note that if someone decides to self-represent, the union has the right to attend the meetings; that comes later).

Section 4: Presentation. This gives the timeline for when the grievances should be admitted. It is 30 working days with the exception of discriminatory harassment, which is one year. It also gives the guidelines for a written grievance.

Section 5: Processing of Grievances. This section has the details of the grievance process and timelines.

As I detailed in the beginning, there are three steps: informal, formal, and president. The informal step (step 1) is

verbal and is basically speaking up to say that something is wrong. Results from the informal step do not set precedence.

The formal step (step 2) is given in writing following the guidelines in section 4. Then a "meeting between the unit head or designee(s) and the grievant or representative(s)." Someone from the graduate school is there with the department head; myself and Amber would love to be there as representatives. "The grievant is encouraged, but not required to attend." "If the grievant elects not to be represented by the Union," the GTFF is notified and we have the right to go to the meeting.

Step 3 is presenting the grievance to the president of the university. This is nearly identical to step 2, but now includes the president's office.

Section 6: Union or University as Grievant. This allows for the union or university to be the grievant. This is automatically a step 3 grievance. This can be the case if the union discovers something that affects a large group of GTFFs across the campus.

Any questions, comments, or especially grievance concerns can reach me at grievances@gtff.net.

*Herbert Grotewohl
VP Grievances
Physics*

Contract Campaign Committee Seeks a Few Good Unionists

As we enter bargaining this year, we'd like to have teams of activists independently taking on the various campaigns we plan to launch and lending their creativity and expertise to the cause.

The Contract Campaign Committee will work in tandem with David Craig's

Bargaining Campaign Committee, but will operate in the campus and Eugene communities more broadly, working on concrete tasks and meeting every few weeks to report and brainstorm.

If you are interested in communications, organizing, or external relations, this committee

would love your help with what promises to be an exciting bargaining year.

Contact Matt at Organizing@gtff.net for more information.

*Matt Hannah
VP Organizing
English*



Working on an Armed Campus

Last month I went as a representative of the GTFF to sit on the Police Implementation Advisory Group (PIAG). While the group is still working on a name change, it was formed last year to seek advice from campus interest groups about arming UO police officers. It played a dual function of communicating police interests to the rest of the campus community. University police were successful in their request and began this new school year with the permission to carry weapons on campus. The PIAG plans to convene on a monthly basis to help facilitate communication between police and the campus community.

As some of you may remember from last year, we had a lively conversation with Kelly McIver, the UO Police communications director, about the issue of arming police during an E-Council meeting. We expressed a wide range of important concerns: the lack of specificity on what types of arms would be purchased; the fact that UO police already possess pistols for mandatory target practice; examples of aggressive police behavior and violence that has taken place on other university

campuses. The GTFF voted to take a stand against arming the police by writing a letter to the UO president voicing our concerns.

Despite our efforts to prevent this development, it is important for us to know what an armed campus actually means. Only trained police officers are allowed to carry a weapon, and not public safety officers. The training is the exact same as a regular police officer and entails four months of police school and upon passing those requirements will complete an additional four months of field training (mostly likely in Eugene). There are a maximum of three police officers that do patrols, but the UO police would like to hire more, preferably out of the pool of existing public safety officers. Since UO police and safety officers are both members of SEIU this is not a work related issue.

Both grad students and faculty have commented on the disturbing sight of police sitting in their souped-up SUVs, perhaps remnant of other features of our national security state. PIAG argued that if the police walked or used bikes instead, to make themselves

more available, they would not be able to respond quickly to calls that occur on the other side of campus. I learned from a conversation with a classified staff person from SEIU that when he works on campus late at night, he feels a sense of relief and safety from seeing the police cars do their routine drives. Some of our fellow members who are stuck working on campus late at night may feel the same way.

However, to what extent armed officers will help the campus police do their job remains to be seen. The law school burglary suspect, David Tetukevich, who had been stealing computers in the law school, was apprehended by Eugene police earlier last month. The arrest was made possible by the UO public safety officers (not campus police) who were the ones to share their information and reports they had gathered. While the UO police are committed to helping serve the campus community, most recently by patrolling accident-prone intersections, there are many concerns and questions regarding the changes made to the police department.

*Joe Henry
VP External Relations
Anthropology*

Cont'd from pg. 1: LESS-T event presents music, speakers

solutions, that will then have a direct voice in decision-making procedures through two ASUO appointed representatives (undergraduate Greg Mills and graduate Dana Rognlie) to the UO Tuition and Fees Advisory Board.

The "Night of the Living Debt" featured three live bands, including an experimental jazz and spoken word performance of Gary Snider's "For Changes" by Jordan Chestnut, Eddie Bond and Rebecca Conner, UO alumni and students of the UO music department; Michael Faherty (GTFF

member, Political Science) and his band "The Cartoon Spirits" rocked the crowd with their own original music; and Wes Shirley (former GTFF member, Sociology) and his band "Outer Party" played punk rock "the way it should be made: political, honest and dirty."

Track Town Pizza also participated in a fundraiser in conjunction with the concert. LESS-T deeply thanks all those who participated in the event and looks forward to future concerts and actions.

If you'd like to get involved, please e-mail lesstuition@gmail.com and check us out on Facebook or our blog: slashtuition.blogspot.com.

In solidarity,

*Dana Rognlie
VP-at-Large, AFT-Oregon
Philosophy,
Women's & Gender Studies*

*Judith Lechner
Co-Chair, AGEL
Chair, LESS-T
German and Scandinavian*



From the Editor

The Editorial Committee for The Agitator is very pleased to have received so many submissions to the newsletter. Keep them coming to member.communications@gtff.net!

If you do submit, we ask that you submit up to 300 words in a Word document with standard formatting. Also, don't forget to include a title! Thanks :)

Staying informed & connected is easier than ever!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about the newsletter at: gtffnewsletter@googlegroups.com
- Come to membership meetings and social events! (see calendar on p. 1 for times and locations)
- Join the Facebook group: GTFF
- Follow on Twitter: @GTFF3544
- Check out the website: www.GTFF.net

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union newsletter?*

*Submissions of all sorts are
welcome!*

*Contact your VP-Member-
ship Communications at
[member.communications@
gtff.net](mailto:member.communications@gtff.net) for more informa-
tion!*



About the GTFF

Our Mission Statement:

"The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, a union of the graduate employees of the University of Oregon, commits to creating a strong, safe, and diverse community of educators and scholars for the purpose of protecting and promoting the interests of its membership."

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) is a labor union representing over 1300 Graduate Teaching Fellows and Research Assistants at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

Our goals are:

- to improve the quality of life for GTFs in the areas of salary, workload and working conditions through collective bargaining and the enforcement of our contract,
- to fight for an adequately funded educational system, accessible for all people, and
- to help create a revitalized, socially aware union movement, which is a positive force for change for the entire community. Volunteers and activists are welcome!