



Graduate Teaching  
Fellows Federation  
AFT/AFL-CIO, Local 3544

December 1st, 2014

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Missy A. Matella  
Assistant General Counsel  
Office of the General Counsel  
219 Johnson Hall  
Eugene, OR 97403

Re: GTFF Local 3544 and University of Oregon

Supervisors polling GTFs about strike participation

Dear Missy,

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, Local 3544 hereby demands that University of Oregon cease and desist from unlawfully coercing graduate teaching fellows (GTFs) from exercising their statutory rights under the Public Employees Collective Bargaining Act (PECBA). Multiple supervisors have polled GTFs via email asking whether the GTF will participate in the upcoming strike. This questioning has a chilling effect on the exercise of protected activity, like striking.

Employer interference with, restraint or coercion of employees in the exercise of protected activities is an unfair labor practice under ORS 243.672(1)(a). The Employment Relations Board has held that "it is inherently coercive for an employer to interrogate its employees regarding their support for, or their activities in support of, their union." *ATU, Division 757 v. Rogue Valley Transportation Dist.*, 16 PECBR 559, 578, *adhered to on recons.*, 16 PECBR 707 (1996). Although the Board has stated that polling public employees about their intent to participate in an upcoming strike may be lawful under certain circumstances, the questioning here did not conform to those requirements. The interrogation did not contain an explicit statement that no reprisals would be taken against the employee regardless of the employee's answer. Accordingly, the polling did not meet the requirements outlined by the Board.

GTFs are protected under the law to engage in organizing and strike activities. The University's questioning is inherently coercive and constitutes an unfair labor practice in violation of the PECBA. The GTFF is prepared to file an unfair labor practice charge in response.

If you would like to discuss these issues please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Amber Cooper

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