



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

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Mark Your Calendar!

Monday, May 5 - Friday, May 9
 GTFF Officer and Steward Elections
GTFF Office, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Wednesday, May 7
 GTFF/EO Bargaining Session
Pacific 16, 12:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Friday, May 9
 GTFF/EO Bargaining Session
Fenton 110, 2 - 5 p.m.

Friday, May 9 & Saturday, May 10
 Great Cover-Up VI
Friday: Luckey's Club Cigar, 9 p.m.
Saturday: Cozmic Pizza, 9 p.m.
\$5 for one night or \$8 for both nights

Wednesday, May 14
 GTFF/EO Bargaining Session
Location TBD, 12:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 15
 GTFF/EO Bargaining Session
Location TBD, 1 - 4 p.m.

Friday, May 16
Emergency General Membership Meeting
Time & Location TBD



Campus Labor Groups Rally on May Day

On Thursday, May 1, over 150 workers and community activists gathered outside Prince Lucien Campbell Hall on the UO campus to celebrate May Day. The purpose for having the rally on the UO campus this year was to support the GTFF as we continue to struggle for a fair contract in this difficult bargaining year. Helping to organize the event with the GTFF was the Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network (ESSN), a network of local unions, activists, and concerned community members. We were joined on stage with the SEIU Labor Choir and State Rep. Phil Barnhart.

The event sent a strong message to the public that workers on the campus of UO are organized and united. SEIU 085 President Carly McNally and United Academics President Michael Dreiling received applause and cheers of support as they stirred

the crowd with their motivating speeches. There was a last-minute appearance by SEIU's Kurt Willcox, who urged GTFs to contact the UO Board of Trustees and inform them about our bargaining.

The fight to secure fair contracts and protect workers' rights was also extended to our allies in the broader labor community. We were joined by Willamette/McKenzie hospital workers, SEIU 49, and the classified staff at the Lane Community College. The UO remains the largest employer in the area, and recently, has been an active site for building and strengthening the labor movement. The rally concluded with a march to the administrative offices at Johnson Hall.

Joe Henry
 VP External Relations
 Anthropology



Notes From a Departing President: ‘All Good Things . . .’

One of the many peculiar things about our union is the periodic turnover in leadership. Stewards serve for a length of time, but eventually step down to let others represent their departments instead; outspoken voices pick up volume over the course of a bargaining campaign, but fade out once the campaign winds down; officers are elected to their one-year terms, but usually pass their batons, panting at the finish line, some 12 months later.

Such regular turnover has a double-impact upon the GTF. On the one hand, should a span of several years be played at fast forward, our union’s leadership appears ephemeral, river-

like, a moving train. There might be 40 leaders over the course of four years. This could spell chaos for an organization differently composed than ours, such as a government or a for-profit corporation.

And yet, considering now the other hand, this regular turnover engenders what is perhaps our union’s greatest strength: we are structurally arranged so as to be self-revitalizing. Precisely because it is cyclically cast afresh, our union’s leadership contributes more—more spontaneity, more energy, more innovation—to the ongoing story of the GTF than would a standing board of leaders serving decade-

long terms.

The time has come for my own tenure as a leader within the GTF—along with the tenures of a number of others—to come to a close. My past two years of service on the executive board, and the last year especially, have been among the most meaningful, exhausting, and worthwhile years of my life. I shall never forget them. My deepest appreciation goes out to all those within our union I have come to know along the way.

*David Craig
President
Philosophy*

Open Letter: President Gottfredson, Stop Wasting Our Time!

After weeks of anticipation, last Friday, April 25, the bargaining team of the University administration finally responded to the GTF’s financial proposals. And I walked out.

Like every other GTF, I’m busy juggling teaching, grading, and my own studies. I take time every week or so to attend the bargaining sessions in order to support our team and find out what’s going on. Every time I delude myself into thinking that I’ll manage to get work done during those 2-3 hours, and every time I end up distracted and frustrated with the performance put on by the University’s negotiator, a lawyer from HLGR. I’ve come to the conclusion that he must either be paid by the hour; that he thinks we’re complete idiots; or that the University is secretly in dire financial straits.

After handing out raises to

every other staff member on campus, the message is that it is the responsibility of GTFs to tighten their belts and guarantee the solvency of the University. The good times are over. The University can’t absorb the risk of healthcare increases or service fee increases (fees which they themselves set). Instead of coming right out and showing us the financial data, making their case why the future of the University rests within our paychecks, healthcare premiums and service fees, they bring backhanded financial proposals to bargaining. One hand gives us a small raise, while the other picks our pocket through healthcare limits and service fees. We’re better off not agreeing to a new contract, forgoing the ‘raises’ and keeping the status-quo.

What’s worse is that either they know that GTFs are capable of simple arithmetic and will never

be able to accept such a package, or they think we are foolish enough to be distracted by the ice cream truck while the house is robbed. In both cases it demonstrates a lack of respect. We all have better things to do. The only people who win from protracted negotiations are HLGR lawyers whose billings could instead pay for some of the proposals the GTF has put forth.

So please stop wasting our time. President Gottfredson, if the University is about to go bankrupt I’ll do my part and make a sacrifice. But I won’t sit through another of these HLGR performances. I need you to come to the next bargaining session, provide the data, and plead your case. Until then, I’ll be outside with a sign chanting my frustration away.

*Thibaud Henin
Steward
Political Science*



Emergency GMM on May 16!

The GTFF Executive Council has called for an **Emergency General Membership Meeting** to be held on Friday, May 16 (time and location TBA).

The sole agenda item of this meeting would be to discuss and decide if the membership would like to call for a strike authorization vote. This vote would be held by ballot box soon after the meeting and would empower the bargaining team to call for a GTFF strike if the team

felt it to be necessary.

A strike will affect **all GTFF members**. It is critical that all voices are heard at this meeting and for everyone to understand their fellow GTFs' points of view. Please try to find the time in your busy schedule to attend this **extremely** important meeting. We must act **swiftly and decisively** if we are going to encourage the Administration to make movement towards us and finish bargaining before the term ends.

AFT-Oregon Candidate Forum

On Saturday, May 10, the AFT-OR Political & Legislative Affairs Committee will hold candidate interviews from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Eugene Public Library.

All GTFs, as well as members from UA and SEIU, are highly encouraged to observe and participate in these interviews. For more information, pick up a flyer in the GTFF office or contact AFT-OR VP-at-Large and Political & Legislative Affairs Committee member Dana Rognlie.

Ask Glenn: Where GTFs ask Glenn all sorts of things about their health insurance

Q: Man, Glenn, I sure have loved me some GTFF health insurance the nine years I was in grad school, but I am graduating this spring and looking towards the unknown future of no employer-based health insurance. What are my options?

A: Congrats on finishing your degree. You are correct, if you graduate this spring term your coverage ends June 15, 2014—even if you paid for summer insurance (if you did pay for summer, you'll have refund coming).

Option 1: COBRA. COBRA is the federal law that allows you to stay on an employer-based insurance plan 18 months past the point your employment ended. It is the exact same coverage, same card, same deductible. The only differences are you have to pay the full price of the plan every month and you will be dealing with a third party COBRA administration contractor, not me. Currently, COBRA costs: \$399.72/month for yourself, \$707.51 for you and kiddo(s), \$839.35 for you and

partner/spouse, and \$1147.17 for the whole family. Couple of things to note:

(a) You have 60 days from the end of your coverage to decide if you want COBRA. Coverage is retroactive to the termination date any time in that window.

(b) You may “à la carte” the coverage levels; e.g., you can elect to have insurance for just your children and be charged the single person amount. Or you can put your partner and child on the plan and be charged the employee+child rate. Etc... Information will be mailed to you. The sooner you let me know you are graduating the sooner I can get the information to you.

Option 2: ACA Health Care Exchanges (in Oregon it's “Cover Oregon”). These are the federal health insurance marketplaces you have read or heard or ignored so much about. Frankly, since I manage an employer-based plan, I know little about the exchanges. However, I can send you

to someone who does know about the exchanges.

Being a union member, you have access to an awesome resource: Working America Health Care. This is a community affiliate program set up by the AFL-CIO whereby you gain free access to a ACA approved insurance broker whose job is to help you navigate the health care exchanges. Go to www.workingamericahealthcare.com and fill out the box on the right. Within 72 hours the broker will contact you and answer your questions, help you apply to the exchange, and even help compare plans/prices. Remember, unless you are ranking in the cash, you'll most likely be eligible for a premium subsidy from the federal government. Working America does not have a broker who is an expert for every state yet (many states, like Oregon have opted to run their own exchange), but give it a shot—they are expanding states quickly.

*Glenn Morris
Benefits Administrator*



May 6th, 2014

THE AGITATOR

GTFF Elections 2014: Officer Candidate Statements

President (Two Candidates)

Joe Henry – Anthropology

Greetings!

My name is Joe Henry and I'm running for the office of the president. I am third year doctoral student in the department of anthropology and my research has been focused on the production of inequality in the U.S. In terms of my experience in the GTFF, I was a department steward for a year before being elected to my current position as VP of external relations. Serving in this position has given me the opportunity to represent the GTFF to the larger labor and activist community. I currently sit on the steering committee for the local chapter of Jobs with Justice, the Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network (ESSN) and was recently elected to the executive board for the Lane County Labor Council. From its beginning I served on the UO Campus Labor Council and continue to be an active supporter of LESS-T. I have worked with GTFs and student groups to promote events like "Take Back the Night," and I have been working with ESSN on planning this year's May Day event. I am very grateful for the many meaningful conversations I have had with members serving on the e-board and e-council and from my colleagues in the anthropology department. As president I look forward to incorporating what I have learned from these experiences, and working with you all on exciting new projects!

Jon LaRochelle – Philosophy

For those who don't know me, I'm a

Philosophy steward and member of the Bargaining Team. If you've been to bargaining sessions or GMMs this year, you'll recognize me as the one that keeps talking about Parental Leave. I've been to the last two AFT-Oregon conventions, and so I have a good sense of union activity at the state level as well. Over the course of this year, I have been impressed by the increasing energy that GTFs are bringing to the Union. This marks an exciting moment for the GTFF, when people are rallying to stand together and fight for recognition by the administration. If I'm elected president, I intend to carry this energy into the coming year. My biggest concern is to maintain momentum at the table, and keep bargaining on the agenda once this round is complete. It's easy to take the first year of the contract off, but I will treat it as a time to reflect, organize, and prepare for the next round. We have a great opportunity to harness the energy generated this year and carry it forward! I would be honored if you gave me the opportunity to do so.

Vice President for Organizing (One Candidate)

Jonathan Turbin – Anthropology

Greetings colleagues. My name is Jonathan Turbin and I am currently a third year graduate student in the Anthropology Department. I am honored to accept my nomination for Vice President of Organizing. I have been an active member of the GTFF since my first year, becoming a steward during my second. Even before serving as a steward I became heavily involved with the GTFF Queer Caucus (currently serving as one of the co-chairs) as well as attending bargaining sessions.

Were I elected to the E-Board I would strive to collaborate with my fellow board members while learning how best to effectively represent the GTFF. Moreover, as Organizing VP, I envision my potential role as a facilitator rather than a "chairperson." I would value obtaining as much of a diversity of opinion from the fellow GTFs as possible, creating a "safe space" for all voices to be heard in a forthright and respectful way. Thank you very much for your consideration and my best wishes to all candidates.

Vice President for Grievances (Two Candidates)

Dave Grych – Physics

As a steward and a member of the GTFF's bargaining team, the ongoing negotiations of this year's bargaining cycle continue to commemorate months of my deepening intimacy with our collective bargaining agreement (CBA) (a bond that includes a winter weekend retreat to Yachats (first vacation together) and the AFT-Oregon convention in Sunriver). As VP of Grievances, I want to share this relationship with lamenting members being overworked, confused about their duties, and generally not receiving the respect they deserve for the work they provide the University. Simply put, I'm someone people can talk to that draws a hard line when it comes to a binding agreement (The Importance of Having Boundaries) and an ecstatic fan of transparency in all relationships including the one GTFs have with the University of Oregon. I'll express my final thoughts as the following:

Here's a quick fact about our CBA
It's got three dozen articles and an



Appendix J

Future terms will be diff'rent, since this one's expired
We've got your back, we'll close the gap! Just as the members desired

Now if you need to talk 'cause you're goin' deranged
I ain't afraid to arrange a one-sided exchange
Even with these terms of agreement
There will still be a bit of bereavement
So come relieve yourself to an MC
Such as me to extinguish ambiguity

Shawna Meechan – Political Science

For those who don't know me, I am a second year doctoral student in political science and have been very active in the union, especially this past year. Specifically, I have been a part of the bargaining team and have been privileged to represent the GTFE at the bargaining table. I feel that this experience has made me intimately familiar with our collective bargaining agreement both as it currently stands and as we hope to have it stand with the new contract. On top of this, I most recently worked for the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry prior to starting my graduate studies, so I feel confident in my knowledge of Oregon labor law. I would love the opportunity to take all of this experience and knowledge and use it to ensure that all GTFs are treated fairly under our contract and under state law and advocate strongly for those who have been mistreated. Additionally, I feel like I have gotten to know much of the membership of the GTFE over the past two years and would like to think that I am both approachable and a good listener for all of you. I hope that you will consider voting for me for your VP of Grievances. Thanks!

Vice President for Political Education (One Candidate)

John O'Connor – Anthropology

Hello GTFE Members,

My name is John O'Connor, and I am a first year PhD student in the Department of Anthropology. I was recently nominated for the office of Vice President for Political Education for our Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation 3544. Upon my arrival to the University of Oregon, I was impressed by the level of commitment among Graduate Teaching Fellows toward the improvement of graduate teaching appointments, the stabilization of benefits and pay, and the cultivation of a student community that recognizes the value of standing together as one voice for the betterment of others. I have been working for the Committee on Political Education (COPE) with our current VP to address issues affecting members of our student body and look for solutions to effectively navigate the system in which we live and work. I look forward to continuing this work as an officer of the GTFE Executive Board. The GTFE 3544 is a unique organization among universities. We are lucky to stand together in solidarity and must make the most of these opportunities for current UO students and those of future cohorts.

Vice President for External Relations (One Candidate)

Heather Marek – Sociology

Heather is interested in issues of peace and justice. She received a masters in conflict and dispute resolution in 2010, and is currently a doctoral student in sociology.

Heather has worked for nonprofits on human rights, civil liberties, and democracy reform, and she is currently a GTFE steward. Upon completion of her program, she hopes to continue this work by conducting public interest research.

Heather greatly values her time spent working in the community, and looks forward to new opportunities to do so. She is running for VP of External Relations with a desire to cultivate relationships with ally groups and build an ever-stronger solidarity movement.

Vice President for Operations (Three Candidates)

Brianna Bertoglio – College of Education

Who am I and why would I be a stellar VP of Operations?

One of the most important tasks for this position is organizing all the social events, GMMs, end of term parties, etc.

As it happens I have years of successful party planning/event coordinating experience! Parties people talk about years later, where everyone feels let down the next day from the fun hangover. As a native Oregonian there is nothing I enjoy more than accommodating dietary needs, so no one is ever left hungry or thirsty on my watch.

Before I started my PhD program (Critical and Sociocultural Studies of Education) I was an elementary school teacher, which means I'm good at making sure everyone feels included and troubleshooting ahead of time so all potential problems are sorted out (take 25 kindergartners to OMSI or 30 ... cont'd pg. 6



from pg. 5 . . . first graders to the zoo and cat like reflexes and tactical planning skills develop!).

I'm good at navigating bureaucracy—skills developed as a public school teacher, but heightened teaching in Abu Dhabi where the Kafkaesque system requires a dozen signatures to get anything done.

VP of Operations needs to make sure the office runs smoothly, supervise the office staff, sit on hiring committees, etc.

Finally a chance to put all that experience from working for non-profits, enduring endless staff meetings, office temping like a madwoman, sitting on hiring committees to good use! Actually, supervising other adults is a really challenging task for anyone but I think I'm good at making expectations clear and communicating respectfully and effectively.

Sitting on the Health and Welfare Trust, the really fun part!

We all know how important the Trust is to us, and I take this part of the job very seriously. Having worked for an HMO and the Red Cross, done billing for an NP, and at a couple Planned Parenthoods I have experience in the healthcare arena and am prepared for taking on this responsibility.

Miscellaneous!

I became active in the GTFF winter term helping on the contract committee and doing weekly canvassing to other departments to inform and encourage involvement in the bargaining sessions. This was equal parts really super fun and daunting, and I feel like I got to meet a lot of the membership and learn what is important to them. I served as a delegate to the AFT Oregon

convention, and have served as a steward for my department and have worked to get more stewards from the College of Education involved.

Apparently, if given a bullhorn I can chant non-stop at an impromptu rally outside of a bargaining session—but I promise if elected VP of Operations I will only use bullhorns judiciously and only in a case of need.

*Malori Musselman –
Political Science*

My studies of unexpected activism through tattooing and the voices of children, as well as my skills in beer brewing and organizing of the biannual Naked Lady clothing exchanges make me an excellent candidate for the VP of Operations.

Evan Shenkin – Sociology

No statement provided.

**Vice President for
Membership Communications
(One Candidate)**

Richard Wagner – Physics

Born the son of a unionized steel worker and hospital dietician, Richard Wagner (no relation) learned the values of hard work and helping others from an early age. After studying at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio (it's complicated), Richard moved on the University of Oregon to pursue a doctoral degree in Physics. Deep into his studies, he found himself missing a purpose and a silly creative outlet, both of which are largely lacking while locked in a physics lab. He began to find these by throwing himself into his union. In addition to working along side the GTFF bargaining team, Richard filled in for the current VP of Member Communications during his absence, wrote long-winded (but little read)

overviews of bargaining session, helped design many event fliers and posters, and has attended both University Administration and State Congressional meetings to speak to issues that impact GTFF members. Learning about the concerns and desires of his fellow GTFFs, helping synthesize these into bargaining strategies and working to find creative ways to reach out to the membership of the GTFF, Richard began to find fulfillment. Very rarely serious, but understanding the seriousness of his union duties, Richard hopes to continue the work he has been doing for your benefit as your next VP of Member Communications because working with the union is, say it with me, fun as crap.

**Treasurer
(One Candidate)**

*Krista Abrahamson –
School of Music and Dance*

I am a soon-to-be PhD candidate in Music Theory. I have GTFFed for 3 years and been in grad school for 5. I am also active in other community groups including social dancing and the Society for Creative Anachronism.

In the GTFF, I have been a steward for Music since the beginning of this year, as well as helping out with the Bargaining Committee and the Contract Campaign Committee. I have enjoyed meeting people from across campus, and hope to be able to serve more in the future. I have previously held the position of treasurer for a small campus group as an undergrad. I like numbers and spreadsheets. I am very well organized, in terms of documents and schedules. As people may have heard, the bulk of the “platform” I'm running with is color-coded spreadsheets. Also, dragons.



How to Live on a GTF Budget

I have a pay-scale II, 0.3 FTE. I get about \$840 after taxes. Here's how I make ends meet:

Rent: \$260 (I share a house with 4 other people)

Utilities: \$50 (yay Springfield!)

Groceries: \$100 (this used to be \$150, but I buy bulk, shop at Winco, and make my own bread. I cook up a big batch of leftovers on Sunday and bring most lunches to school)

Eating Out: \$100 (This allows me to eat out at \$10/meal twice a week for those days when I don't have time to cook. Not as money efficient, but who has the time?)

Dog supplies: \$50 (Or saving up for when he need the vet.)

Medical: \$50 (Massages, psychologist visits.)

School/office supplies: \$30

Hobbies: \$20 (fabric and thread!)

Other: \$15 (lightbulbs, toothpaste, bike tubes)

Entertainment: \$15 (going out dancing, movies.)

Savings: \$150 (I don't count on having a job in the summer.)

You may notice that this does not cover having a car (I don't), school fees, my renter's insurance, or summer health insurance. This year I got lucky and covered insurance payments with my tax refund. This means that I can't use my tax refund for professional development/conference travel. Also, I don't really have room in this budget for bike repair, or expensive textbooks, or if I have to buy prescriptions for whatever crud the freshmen gave me. I also must rely on the kindness of my home-brewer friends in order to have beer. I am quite lucky to have the support of my parents and the ability to pick up some tutoring on

the side, but it is always tight.

Here's a recipe if you're unfamiliar with cooking, or just want something different to try:

Easy, cheap, filling, Gluten-Free, Vegan leftovers to bring for lunch:

- 2 cups brown rice
- 2 cups lentils
- Dollop of oil or Tbsp butter
- 5 cups water
- Cut up kale, chard, spinach or other things
- One clove to one head of garlic
- Salt—at least 4 handfuls
- Pepper to taste
- 1 bay leaf

Get a big pot. Start boiling your water. Add rice, lentils, salt, and oil. Cut up your veggies to fit on your spoon or fork. Add the veggies and spices. Stir. Once the pot is boiling, turn down the heat to medium-ish. Go watch an episode of something on Netflix. Stir, check what the spices taste like. If the lentils are still crunchy, go watch another episode. Let cool and put in tupperware!

Other additions to try:

- 1 cup millet (increase water content to match)
- Chopped onion
- Canned tomatoes of any kind
- Whatever vegetable is on sale this week! bok choy, asparagus, green beans, zucchini
- Substitute canned beans for lentils for a faster cook time; also, white rice takes about half the time of brown.

*Krista Abrahamson
Steward
School of Music and Dance*

Food for Deep Thoughts

Summer is around the corner, and what better way to cool down the heat with a glass of homemade lemongrass & mint—a tasty drink that has been scientifically proven to quench your thirst!

Ingredients:

- 3 stalks of lemongrass
- 10 mint leaves
- ½ an orange, only the peel
- 2 liters of water
- 1 Tbsp of brown sugar or more (optional)
- A pinch of salt

Instructions:

1. Bring water to boil on high.
2. Bruise the lemongrass, then cut them into pieces (about an inch).
3. Put the lemongrass into the boiling water for about 10 minutes. (Add sugar if you want your drink to be sweet). The water should look green-ish. Do not stir.
4. Throw in the orange peel and mint leaves.
5. Take the mint leaves out after 5 minutes. Turn off the heat. Leave the orange peel in for another 3 minutes.
6. Add a pinch of salt.
7. Pour the liquid through a sieve, making sure that no lemongrass gets into the pitcher.
8. Let it cool. Add some ice cubes. Voila!

Tips: For best results, only use fresh lemongrass. And of course, you can drink this hot, too.

*Wan Vajrabhaya
Steward
American English Institute*



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!

Staying informed & connected is easier than ever!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about the newsletter at: member.communications@gtff.net
- Come to membership meetings and social events! (see calendar on pg. 1 for times and locations)
- Join the Facebook group: GTFF
- Follow on Twitter: @GTFF_3544
- Check out the website: www.GTFF3544.net

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Physics

*Want to contribute to
your union newsletter?*

*Submissions of all sorts are
welcome!*

*Contact your
VP Membership
Communications at
[member.communications@
gtff.net](mailto:member.communications@gtff.net) for more
information!*



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 GTFFs 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!