

May 2nd, 2016

THE AGITATOR



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

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Upcoming Events!

Monday, May 2nd- Friday, May 6th
GTFF Elections. The ballot box is located at the GTFF office Monday through Friday from 10am- 4pm. Traveling ballot box locations can be seen at gtff.net

Friday, May 6th, 2-8pm
Disabilities on Campus Forum. Join the GTFF, and other groups on May 6th for a day of raising awareness about disability

Friday & Saturday May 6-8th
The Great Cover Up! Join The GTFF and CGE at Luckey's bar for a celebration of our favorite music! Proceeds go to Food For Lane County!

Friday, June 3rd, 5pm
GTFF End of Term BBQ
Alton Baker Park, Picnic Shelter 1

Election Edition!

Disabilities on Campus
A Forum for Faculty, Staff, and Students

May 6th, 2016

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation Presents

Eighth Annual Great Cover Up Benefit Concert

Friday May 6th, Doors 8pm
Saturday May 7th, Doors 9pm

Luckey's Club
933 Olive Street
Eugene, Oregon

\$10 for both nights, \$6 for one night
All proceeds go to Food for Lane County



GTFF Officer Candidates

President

Kadie Manion (Sociology):

Greetings, Comrades!

I'm excited and honored to accept the nomination for President of the GTFF. Currently, I'm a third year graduate student in sociology, and I study social movements, media, and political economy. My involvement in the union includes being a steward for a year, on the Organizing Committee for a year, a picket captain during the strike, and on the COPE. Most recently, over this last year I have served as VP of Political Education. In this role I've been staying informed on political issues that could affect our union and developing ways to educate our members on these issues. I've also thought deeply about our political endorsement process and tried out new ways for doing endorsements in an efficient, inclusive manner, while still recognizing the political nature of our union. I have also served as a delegate this last year to the AFL-CIO Lane County Labor Chapter and as a delegate at AFT-OR Convention. This term I've been working as one of our temporary organizers (with Eleanor Wakefield) to try to fill Amber's big shoes. In order to be best prepared for this position, I've been participating in a Member Organizer Development Program through AFT-OR, through which I've learned a lot of valuable organizing skills.

I have three main goals for as President next year and for our union in general:

- 1) I hope to mobilize, organize, and empower our members by improving the democratic processes of our union and by moving towards a more member-driven, social movement unionism. This would entail further empowering marginalized members and caucuses, as well as increasing transparency, in order to create an inclusive climate for all members. Furthermore, I would like to give our rank-and-file members more active decision-making power and ensure the leadership listens to what our membership needs.
- 2) My second goal is to build solidarity by working closely with campus and community groups to build lasting relationships with them. This includes reaching out more to other graduate employee unions like Coalition of Graduate Employees, and supporting organizing efforts at Portland State University. I would also like to do more outreach to groups attempting to unionize and groups representing marginalized workers, and offer our support and show solidarity with them. The GTFF is a leader in the campus community and the local labor movement and I plan on further amplifying our role as such.
- 3) If we are still in bargaining if/when I take office, I would like to increase transparency with this process and create a more aggressive contract campaign. Recently, I've been helping put together the Contract Action Team (CATs) that will help in publicizing our bargaining efforts and support our bargaining team. I plan on winning the best contract possible for the GTFF.

I plan on building power in the community, on campus, at the bargaining table, and empowering our members and building solidarity along the way. I really appreciate this opportunity to help transform our union and I hope you'll vote for me!

In solidarity,
Kadie Manion



GTFF Officer Candidates

VP For Grievances

Micah Black:

My name is Micah Black, and I'm a second-year doctoral student in the Department of Political Science. I'm currently the lead notetaker for the bargaining team, and also the interim VP of Grievances. I would love to continue serving in this position for the GTFF this following year. I have really enjoyed my time serving on the bargaining team, and it's given me a really close knowledge of the contract, which I believe is one of the most important aspects of serving as the Grievances Officer. My close knowledge of the CBA will be really helpful in ensuring that it is being followed! I'm also really enjoying serving as interim Grievances office, and my experience this term will be helpful if I am fortunate enough to be elected for next year.

Brian Rosenberg:

Brian is a graduate employee in the department of sociology.

VP For Equity and Inclusion

Nicole Francisco:

I am running for VP of Equity and Inclusion. As the current chair for the GEs of color caucus, former chair for the queer caucus, and member of the women's caucus and workers' caucus; I am very passionate about creating mechanisms within the union to empower and foster leadership from groups of traditionally marginalized voices. More broadly, instilling values of equity and inclusion is paramount to the mission of solidarity of the GTFF and unions more generally. I fully believe in the slogans that we shout out at the picket lines, like "when you take one of us on, you take all of us on" and "solidarity forever" and I intend to cultivate those values in the boardroom.

Genevieve Perdue:

Genevieve is a graduate employee in the geological sciences.

VP For Political Education

Lola Loustaunau:

Compañeros!

I'm Lola, a first year PhD Sociology student from Buenos Aires, Argentina. First, let me confess that one of the reasons why I choose to come to University of Oregon was the GTFF, because I've heard of your strength, your actions, your commitment. Since I was very young I've been involved in social justice movements and different labor organizations and was very excited about the possibility of being part of our union. As soon as I got to

Eugene I started trying to find ways of participating and helping out in our organization, to build a strong union and create solidarity not only among GEs but throughout the community we are part of. For the past few months I have been a steward for the Sociology department, co-chair of the Workers' Caucus and lately I have been acting as a temporary co-chair of the International GEs Caucus. I have also been a member of the Organizing Committee and was a delegate to the AFT-Higher Education Conference and the AFT-Oregon Convention. As a VP of Political Education I intend to help create a space where GEs can discuss and find ways of engaging in different political actions and debates. I want to move our political discussion beyond the limits of electoral politics and think about different issues such as the fight for the raise of the minimum wage, working rights for adjunct professors, labor rights for farm and immigrant workers, social movement unionism, fight against austerity/neoliberal policies, rank and file organizing. I intend to work very closely with the VP of External Relations to build bridges with other organizations and find ways of empowering our members for a strong, democratic and egalitarian union.



GTFF Officer Candidates

VP For Operations

Jessica Neafie:

Jessica is a graduate employee in political science, and the current VP for Operations.

Treasurer

Denielle Perry:

Denielle is a graduate employee in geography, the chair of the parents caucus and the current Treasurer.

VP For External Relations

Diego Contreras Medrano:

Diego is a graduate employee in sociology.

VP For Membership

Win McLaughlin:

Win is a graduate employee in the geological sciences.

VP For Organizing

Devin Lea:

Devin is a steward in Geography, and an active participant in the organizing committee.

VP For Member Communications

No Candidate. Write in yourself or someone else!

In Support of Replacing Robert's Rules

Changes to Robert's Rules (article 11) have been suggested by the equity committee and the VP of Equity and Inclusion. This rule system is similar to what we have been using this past year, but simplified and doesn't rely on an external 669 page book. One of the pieces of feedback we have gotten is that our rule system is alienating to members of several different cultures specifically because of its rigid formality. Though Robert's Rules has some good points – it does keep our meetings rolling and orderly – the intricacy and formality of the rule set is difficult for new members, and keeps power of the meeting disproportionately in the hands of individuals who know the rules. By creating a modified and simplified set of these rules, we hope to accomplish the good parts of Robert's Rules while maintaining a meeting space that feels welcoming to all members and is quick and easy to learn.

The Equity Committee



The GTFF Needs Clear Voting Rules

The proposed bylaw amendments for article 11 are not suitable for the GTFF. We must have a clear, well-defined process for decision making.

Simply removing Robert's Rules, without any alternative, leaves the GTFF with no way to make decisions. Every decision then lies with a meeting's chair as there are no guidelines, and no accountability, for how to do business. Unfortunately, the proposed alternative still lacks specificity. Decisions are made only if there is a "clear" majority. Even with a majority, if there is "close to a tie", decisions are still not made. What constitutes "clear" or "close"? Again, this is at the discretion of the chair. They get to decide a vote's result – not the voters.

I do not intend to question the integrity of the GTFF leadership, present, past or future, but we must have clear guidelines for decision making. Annually, the GTFF hires an auditor to review our finances. The auditor goes through the minutes of all meetings to track down financial decisions: why money is spent, which "pool" of money (fair-share or full member) was used, and how budget lines were adjusted. The auditor requires clear decisions and has criticized note taking in the past. An unclear voting process will make that much worse and their job more difficult. Additionally, the GTFF has been sued at least twice, by both members and non-members. If this were to happen again, the GTFF needs clear rules so that it can protect itself and its leaders, employees and members.

So, I encourage you to vote against the proposed bylaw amendments for article 11. I do not love Robert's Rules. They have many problems. But the proposed amendments do not offer a viable alternative decision making process for the GTFF.

Richard Wagner
Physics

In Support of Officer Term Extensions

I am proposing a bylaw change (article 6) to help ensure a better transition period for our leadership and to protect against the loss of institutional memory. Currently, our bylaws state that new officers take over their elected office on the Monday following their election. In the past, this has regularly meant that new officers have had to organize and run large meetings, social events, and meet represent the GTFF in meeting where they haven't been properly prepared. By treating the first few weeks after

an election as a transition period where the outgoing officers are committed to seeing the school year through and the new officers can learn the whole scope of the positions they are taking on, we can spend more time moving forward as a union and less time relearning the basics.

Shawna Meechan
GTFF President
Political Science



GTFF Organizer Applicant Statements

The GTFF is hiring a new organizer and we want your help! The four applicants who will be interviewed the week of May 13th have been submitted the statements below. Give them a read and let us know what you think at operations@gtff.net! We'll be holding a meet and greet for these applicants on Friday, May 13th, and you're all invited to come and get to know them!

Steve McAllister

My name is Steve McAllister, I'm a GTFF alumnus and community organizer in Eugene, OR. I've been active in social justice and progressive movements my entire adult life, and I really hit my stride as a member and officer of the GTFF, where I served as a departmental steward (in Biology) for seven years, Health and Welfare Trustee for four years, and Treasurer (of first the GTFF, and then AFT-Oregon) for two years. I also served on two GTFF bargaining teams, under two different lead negotiators, including the team that organized the 2014 Strike; I am therefore very familiar with the contract as it stands, as well as its weaknesses and the Administration's strategies at the table and in grievances. I am passionate about helping to build and maintain a diverse, engaged union that is a force for good in the lives of GTFs and the University community as a whole. I have a great deal of institutional memory and experience with this union that I can draw upon if given the opportunity to continue my service!

Michael Marchman

I grew up in eastern Iowa and earned my BS (psychology) and an MA (geography) from the University of Iowa. I have had a life-long commitment to social and economic justice, organized labor, and to the mission of higher education. While a graduate student at the University of Iowa, I was deeply involved with UE Local 896-COGS (Campaign to Organize Graduate Students), the union representing graduate employees at the University of Iowa. I held several elected positions in COGS including Department Steward, Area Chief Steward and Campus Chief Steward. As Chief Steward I was responsible for steward recruitment and training and was the union's chief grievance officer. I was also a member of the local's Coordinating and Bargaining & Grievance Committees and served as a member of the contract bargaining team during contentious but highly successful contract negotiations. After completing my MA at Iowa, I went to the University of Kentucky to pursue a PhD in economic and labor geography, studying taxi drivers and taxi driver unions in the Caribbean tourism industry. In the absence of collective bargaining rights for most public employees, including graduate employees, I collaborated with colleagues to form Graduate Student Employees for the Commonwealth to fight for better pay and working conditions for university workers. From 2006 to 2010, I worked as a lecturer at Northern Kentucky University before deciding to abandon my PhD and pursue work as an academic organizer. In 2010, however, my partner was offered a research fellowship at the University of Amsterdam and we decided to move to the Netherlands. I have spent the last five years working as a lecturer at Wageningen University where I was also an elected member of the University's Workers Council, negotiating with administrators on behalf of employees over working conditions, budgets, and strategic vision at the university. I was also highly active in my union, FNV, the largest public sector union in the Netherlands, working on the union's national, "Changing our Universities" campaign to strengthen rank-and-file activism on university campuses and to counter neoliberal reforms in higher education. Outside the university, I was active in a number of organizations and campaigns working for social and economic justice. In late 2015 I returned to the US to pursue academic organizing and labor education on a full-time basis closer to home. When I'm not organizing my fellow workers I like to read, socialize with friends, and ride my bicycle. And now that I'm back in the US, I'm looking forward to dusting off my old homebrew kettle and putting it back to work.

Cont . on pg. 7



GTFF Organizer Applicant Statements (cont...)

Matthew Hannah

My union experience began early. My first job was in a union shop, United Food and Commercial Workers local 555. I witnessed co-workers getting laid off due to injuries earned on the job, but I also witnessed union stewards fighting for their reinstatement and accommodation. Working in a union shop became central to my perception of myself as a worker and thinker. When I returned to university for graduate school, I immediately volunteered to serve as a steward for the English Department where I organized my department, recruiting new stewards to become active in executive council and union events. We began to establish a strong union presence in English where none had existed before. I developed my own listserv of members and communicated regularly with them about upcoming actions and events. Before long, I became known as “union Matt” around the department. I stepped up to volunteer as Vice-President of Organizing in 2013 and was elected to serve during the bargaining year. I worked with Rodolfo Palma of AFT to implement a strategy of union activism around bargaining, which began at the e-council retreat and culminated in our eight-day strike. We set benchmarks for

union participation in order to build a large presence at actions, and I organized a contract campaign committee with other key activists within the union. We spent the year meeting weekly to strategize, knocking on doors, handing out fliers, talking with members, and recruiting non-members. I also coordinated a media campaign who were successful in establishing a social media presence, publishing articles about the union, and raising awareness outside Eugene about our struggle. Coordinating this contract campaign committee paved the way for a vibrant and energetic union presence on picket lines during the strike, which took place the next year. Although I was finishing my dissertation when bargaining impasse was declared, I actively participated in the strike, leading marches and chants, giving interviews to media, and coordinating supplies and materials when needed. I remain committed to activism around campus in the belief that an enthusiastic and politically aware campus makes a better learning environment for all students. In my union work and activism, I seek collaborations with members, and I believe the best union organizers instill a sense of camaraderie and shared participation among all graduate employees.

Theresa Alderman

Theresa was educated in public schools in both Michigan and up-state New York. She is a graduate of Waterford Kettering High School and obtained her B.A. degree in International Relations from Michigan State University. Thereafter she earned her J.D. from the Thomas M. Cooley Law School. She is a member of the Labor and Employment Law sections of the American Bar Association and Michigan Bar Association, and she is admitted to practice law in the states of Michigan and Wisconsin. Theresa has 12 years of public sector labor law experience working as both a Staff Attorney and UniServ Director for the Michigan Education Association. In these capacities she represented, advised, and trained Association staff, leaders, and members (both public school and higher education employees). In addition to this experience, Theresa enjoyed a 12-year career with the Michigan Education Association in both the executive and legislative branches of state government, including in-depth experience in professional regulation and administrative law. In 2014, Theresa made the decision to move to Oregon. She is currently an entrepreneur, operating her own small business as a business coach and consultant specializing in startups and labor and employment law issues (i.e., dispute resolution, fair work policies, anti-discrimination issues, etc).



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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VP Membership Communications
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Want to contribute to your union newsletter?

Submissions of all sorts are welcome!

Contact your VP Membership Communications at 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 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!