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SEIU: Salaries will now be equal statewide

Continued from page 1

staff perform on our campuses that is valued by the entire campus community," acting chancellor of OUS George Pernsteiner said in a press release.

Star Holmberg, SEIU member of the higher education bargaining team, said she is recommending a "yes" vote on the contract language for 28 newly revised articles.

"I'm very hopeful that it will pass. A lot of our members feel it to be a balanced contract, especially considering we're coming out of a step freeze," Holmberg said.

For two years, classified employees have not gotten a salary step increase, which is calculated for inflation and cost of living increases.

Those at the bargaining table wanted compensation for these lost wages.

Salary increases of 2 percent or \$50 per month, whichever is more, were made effective July 1, and a second increase of the same amount will take place on Dec. 1, 2006.

"The new contract is not

necessarily making up for the cost of living increases we've seen since the freeze," Holmberg said. "But we did prevail on issues around regional salary selectives increases."

Rick Hampton, director of Labor and Employee Relations for OUS management said, "I think it's a good agreement for the workers and OUS."

"Individual workers may not feel like they're made whole by this agreement," Hampton said, "but the intent was to provide as much catch-up as possible, and they're getting the same packages that all other state employees are getting."

The OUS management representatives originally proposed regional salary selectives where people at different universities would be paid different salaries for the same work.

"We got salary selectives for all seven schools," Holmberg said, referring to University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University, Eastern Oregon University, Southern Oregon University, Western Oregon University and Oregon Institute of Technology.

"Total, we got 21 classifications for

salary selectives increases," Holmberg said, which is effective Jan. 1, 2006, "making more places for people to go within their classification."

Holmberg attributes the success of the union not only to union representatives at the bargaining table, but all classified workers who wrote letters to chancellor Pernsteiner and all who organized and attended rallies.

"It's the actions of members in the process that really made the bargaining contract to be successful," Holmberg said, "not just the bargaining table."

Classified workers on step one through six of the pay range as of July 1 will receive an additional step if they did not receive a step increase between July 1 and Oct. 1, 2003. In addition, employees who work 80 hours per month or more will receive full Public Employees Benefits Board health, dental and basic life insurance through December 2006. Part-time employees will receive pro-rated benefits contribution and subsidy through the end of 2007.

nwilbur@dailyemerald.com

Response: Mayor supports civil rights for all people

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advertisement in the Register-Guard costs between \$600 and \$4,000 depending on size and placement.

"There are a lot of Christian organizations who are doing everything they can to stop gay people from entering into any kind of legally recognized committed relationship," Edwards said. "My concern is that the upstanding partner with whom I form that bond should be entitled to any employment benefits I have, social security — hospital visitation is a biggie."

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy was at the event and stood in the photograph.

"I'm a strong supporter of basic rights for all people in the community," Piercy said. "And I'm glad to stand here today."

Piercy said she heard about the event by e-mail.

Local talk radio host Nancy Stapp helped publicize the event on station KOPT 1600AM.

"My friend Hallie told me she wanted to do something about that ad," Stapp said. Edwards went on Stapp's radio program several times in order to talk about the event.

"We've got to get the word out," Stapp said. "We've got to answer that hatred with love — and a family photo."

Stapp said she too was impressed by the turnout.

"I love community radio," Stapp said. "You can decide two days ago to do something and tell people to come and they will."

Stapp said she hopes more people will help support the cause.

"This isn't a gay issue. It's a human rights issue," Stapp said. "And good people know that."

Dan McGuire, who took some of the pictures at the event, heard about the event through Stapp's broadcast.

"I'm always listening to the progressive programs on the radio," McGuire said.

"My marriage does not need defending," said local activist Mac McFadden, who was at the event.

McFadden is a veteran of the war in Vietnam.

"One of the reasons why I thought I served was liberty and justice for all," McFadden said. "And I really believe in

that, and that means liberty for everybody, even people I don't like."

McFadden said he has a number of homosexual friends, and that he thinks they ought to have the right to marry.

"We have different lifestyles and that doesn't bother me," he said.

The Defense of Marriage Coalition is a Portland-based nonprofit that was active in lobbying for the passage of Measure 36, which defined marriage in Oregon as a union between one man and one woman.

"The Defense of Marriage Coalition is a bi-partisan organization of concerned pastors, elected officials, community leaders and citizens united together to preserve marriage as a union only between one man and one woman," according to the Web site.

According to the coalition's advertisement that ran in the Register-Guard, "SB1000 Undermines Measure 36 ... gives gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender individuals the same minority status as African-Americans ... Violates the Separation of Church and State ... Requires Public Education on Sexual Orientation."

Representatives of the coalition were unavailable for comment.

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